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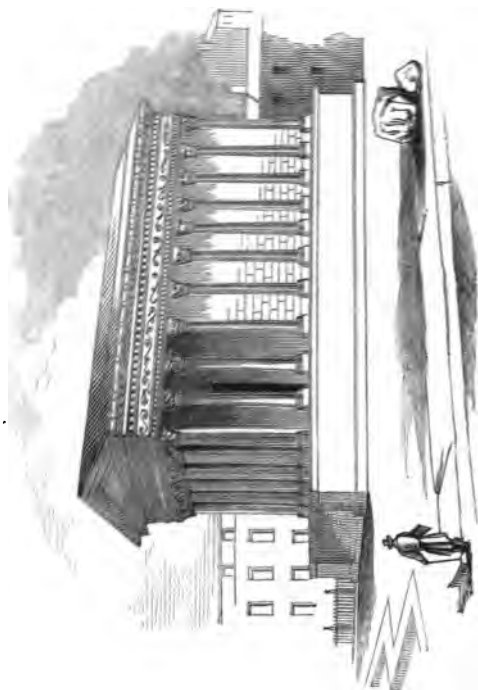
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DAY
AT
NISMES.



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THE MAISON CARRÉE, NÎMES.

A Day in Alice's

CHAPTER I.

BEATA ELIZAB.

CH. I.

LONDON:

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1856.



A Day in Nîmes:

A Sketch.

BY

BEATA ELIZABETH MACAULAY.

—“ Le Nîmois est à demi-Romain ;
Sa Ville fut aussi la Ville aux sept collines,
Un beau soleil y luit sur de grandes ruines,
Et l'un de ses enfans se nommait ANTONIN.”

Reboul.



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P R E F A C E.

THE following pages have but little claim to originality.

To a slender narrative I have joined on anecdotes of places and persons, for which I am, in many instances, indebted to various French writers, from whose works I have translated, and adapted, sentences and paragraphs, where it suited my fancy to weave them into my tale.

Among these local authorities are the names of *M. Vigne-Malbois*, Mayor of Aiguesmortes in 1834; of *M. E. Frossard*, now of Montaubon, whose work on Nismes, and the country for sixty miles round, (published a few years ago at Nismes, in *Livraisons*,) contains a quantity of amusing, miscellaneous information about the South of France; of *M. de Bellevalle* of Montpellier; of *M. Hugues* of Grand-Gallargues, and of many

others; besides those of Ménard, and Count Gasparin, old and well-known authorities upon the topography of Provence and Languedoc.

This little Sketch of Nismes, written for the most part, long ago, is now, at the suggestion of some friends, published; though I scarcely venture to look for readers of it beyond the narrow circle of private acquaintances.

B. E. M.

EAST COWER, ISLE OF WIGHT,
19th March, 1855.

A DAY IN NISMES.

CHAPTER I.

CHATEAU GARDON.

THE small town of Uzès in the department of Gard, that now numbers about seven thousand inhabitants, was formerly the chief place in the *Uségeois* country, and, for at least nine hundred years, was an episcopal see. During the Roman rule it possessed a College of Priests, devoted to the worship of Augustus. Uzès has many antique inscriptions that verify the existence of this college. Christianity was early introduced into Uzès. Constance, one of its first Bishops, attended the Council of Arles in 455, and Probatius, that of Agde in 506.

The Reformation made rapid progress in Uzès. The greater part of the population early followed that movement, at the head of which was the Bishop with his whole chapter.

Below the episcopal palace, now made the sub-

prefecture and town-hall, is a splendid terrace, shaded by fine trees, and commanding a noble view. If we follow this cool avenue we may rest at a little pavilion, half hidden by the branches of an enormous lote tree; it is Racine's pavilion,—the author of *Athalie* resided here, occasionally, during his youth; his uncle was a canon of Uzès.

The climate of Uzès on a summer's day, is thus described for us by Racine, in a letter to De la Fontaine, June 13, 1662, and it remains, as we may suppose, pretty much the same now.

“The harvest is getting in here; opposite to me are a heap of reapers, roasting in the blaze, and working away like demons. When they are out of breath they throw themselves on the ground, under the vertical beams of the sun, sleep a few minutes, and then jump up again. I only see this from my window; I could not be out a moment without dying; the air is as hot as the breath of a lighted oven.”

From the terrace of this pavilion the eye wanders over the delightful valley of Gisfort; the heat of Uzès being, as we have seen, most formidable, we will descend into this privileged valley, with any patient reader who may be so amiable as to accompany us, and having examined the ruins of an ancient Druidical temple, now in rapid course of demolition by the thistles in summer and the frosts in winter, will cross the noisy brook

by a rustic bridge, and returning in a northern direction, follow the windings of the valley.

It seems quite extraordinary to be so soon transported from the dusty roads and dark streets of Uzès to such a fresh and green retreat. We see all around us tumultuous and glittering cascades, sharp rocks, grassy slopes, and hills draped by noble trees, and surmounted by the picturesque tower of Uzès, shooting up over the landscape, light and aerial as an Italian belfry.

The beautiful fountain of Eure, that formerly fed the aqueduct of Nismes, emerges foaming from fissures at the base of a rock that stands in advance of the others, like a sentinel. From this spring formerly drank the Roman legions, but now industry, with its dikes and screaming mills, has claimed a right to it, and the marvels of modern art are produced at the beautiful silk manufactory adjacent, by the aid of its waters. The acanthus, with its corinthian leaves, profusely decorates the oddly-shaped peaks and spires of the rocks, sharpened into whimsical forms by the continuous agency of the active fountain.

The shadowy light of eve adorns the whole scene, and the odours from the valley rise luxuriously beneath the falling dew; and now, full of the pleasantness of the landscape, and soothed by the song of the nightingale, that thrills sweet and clear over the hoarse tumult of the factories, we

will bear away with us a remembrance of beauty and harmony.

"The situation of Uzès," says Racine, in another letter to De la Fontaine, "you must know is on a very high hill, which hill is one continued rock, so that in any weather we may go dry-shod round the town. The surrounding fields are covered by olives yielding the finest-looking fruit imaginable, but very deceitful, nevertheless."

Stepping downward out of Uzès, along the winding road leading to Nismes, we find it marked by twelve stones, erected in 1780, at distances of about one mile from each.

At St. Nicholas de Campagnae, half way between Uzès and Nismes, the river Gardon is crossed by an ancient bridge, at the head of which still stand the remains of a convent, with its out-works, formerly arrayed for defence in days of trouble. There are few sites in France more delicious; the water is clear, the vegetation rich and varied; there are ruins admirably tinged by sun and shade, and, farther on, threatening rocks, grey with lichens, or weltering in the light.

At the base of these rocks the rapid stream whirls tumultuously round some shapeless wreck, the remnant of a mill of ancient construction. Could this be the mill that Lewis the Fourteenth possessed between Nismes and Uzès, and whence, eight months before his death, to postpone the

fatal term by choice nourishment, he had, by the aid of fourteen mules richly caparisoned, fourteen loads of the finest flour? We will suppose it was; but be this as it may, it is by this mill, near St. Nicholas, with Blauzac on one side, and Sagriers on the other, that on an ascent planted with mulberry trees and olives, and showing farther on rich fields of wheat, rises conspicuously the ancestral mansion of Felix, a young Frenchman descended from one of the old noble families of Provence, and owning property there to a large extent, with whose movements we are desirous to interest the reader, as he is about to visit places rich in historical associations and remembrances, and also pleasant to the eye to look upon.

The turrets and battlements of Château Gardon carry us back to the middle ages, whilst a profusion of spacious windows, lighting and ventilating long suites of modern apartments, luxuriously cultivated gardens, richly filled conservatories, and well-kept avenues, indicate it to be the dwelling of prosperous people in the nineteenth century.

Château Gardon is, indeed, the present abode of the young and happy. "All that's bright must fade!" And now, leaving Felix and his fair bride Suzanne, to felicity whilst it is within their reach, we will say something of the dashing river from which their habitation is named.

The Gardon is as restless as the imagination

ever pictured the most excitable Frenchman to be. It is impossible to say at what distances from it Buicouran, and certain other miscreated villages, are situated. To-day they are a mile off; to-morrow they are on the brink, and over the brink. Habitually imperceptible amidst the sands that encumber its basin, the Gardon sometimes stretches its mounting waves into the streets and houses of the adjacent hamlets. When a dweller in the Gardonese, looking "*northward long and hard*," and descrying the blue tint, long familiar to his eyes, exclaims, "*The Gardon is coming!*" then take heed to the friendly voice, for incontinently the river is upon you with the velocity of Mr. Pringle's ostrich, that "speeds like a horseman who travels in haste." The river comes on, and on, with ominous sound one broad, hostile sheet of water; and ever roaring louder and expanding wider as it comes, sweeps off unwary cattle, uproots trees, arouses slumbering men, adroitly carts the gravel beds of one parish on to the corn-fields of another; thunders at the door of every building in its way, burglariously breaking into the more fragile, and carrying off the moveables, and finally, plunges the population of a district half as large as Rutlandshire, into dread and desolation; then, a few hours after, it slackens its pace, no one knows why, and, as if ashamed of its outbreak, slinks back, peaceable and insignificant,

to its original boundary, where it puddles along again as if nothing had happened.

The Vidourle river possesses the same characteristics of hasty risings as the Gardon, but its inundations are still more important to the landowner, as the country laid under water is wealthy in vineyards, yielding some of the finest fruit in France. It is grievous to behold the purple hue of the rich grapes that excite the admiration of strangers, and are the pride and the hope of the vine-grower, colouring the plain for miles along the course of the relentless Vidourle. A terrible river is the Vidourle, all drought or inundation.

Felix had valuable property in the vicinity of this river; he was desirous to note the traces of an outbreak that had recently done unusual damage, and proposed to his young wife an excursion to Gallargues, which is reached by following the course of the Vidourle.

It was the end of August; the weather was splendid, and as the breeze from the hills swept over the thymy and odorous plains of Uzès, early morning equestrian parties from the castle sought health and gladness in the open air before the heat became oppressive. Excellently mounted on a palfrey that might have done honour to a beauty of the Court of *Louis Quatorze*, the graceful figure of Suzanne was seen to advantage emerging from the great gateway of Château Gardon,

as, with Felix, she inhaled the fragrant breath of dawn.

It was during one of these rides that the plan of the southward journey was suggested; two days afterwards the travelling party were on their way for Gallargues and Aiguesmortes. Felix hastened the excursion, as he expected a friend from England, a near kinsman to his deceased mother, herself an Englishwoman, and who now was hastening to Château Gardon to make acquaintance with its young mistress.

History has given a sad celebrity to the Cevennes; the long story of civil disturbances, that arose out of religious persecutions, presents a dreadful series of destructions and reprisals, that humanity may well desire to consign to oblivion.

But this ground, formerly drenched with the blood of its people shed by the hands of brothers, is now enriched by the labours of an industrious and peaceable population.

The Cevennes gain daily increasing interest by the blending of the wonders of modern skill and toil with picturesque sites. We now invite the reader to join our travelling party to La Salle, a manufacturing town in the Cevennes district, and one of the most gossiping places in France, a sort of *Little Pedlington* in its way. It possesses about three thousand inhabitants, and is one street of nearly a mile in length, which, narrow

and winding, follows the course of a half dried up stream. La Salle stretches on like a floating ribbon from the bridge of Saint Hypolyte to the bridge of Nougarede. There is no such thing as an old house, or an antique gateway even, to be met with in it, but it is one interminable series of modern dwellings, where art gives place to utility, and economy triumphs over all. Every house is, in fact, a silk manufactory, with a sort of workshop attached to it; some are built quite over the bed of the stream, and, supported by arches, or strengthened by granite buttresses, and here and there overhung by the spreading branches of magnificent chesnut trees, are pretty objects at a little distance. But the smoke from the high chimneys occasionally tarnishes the landscape, though sometimes indeed it improves the effect by giving a shadowy back ground. The active and noisy population of La Salle are ever swarming round these buildings, out and in, like ants at high business. When the machines are set in motion, to the deafening noise of the frames is joined the hum of some monotonous song, whose chorus, repeated again and again, forms a vague but harmonious sound, pleasing when not heard too near.

But La Salle, now merry and mercantile, has been the theatre of fearful tragedies; several of the legal murders perpetrated in the South of

France in the seventeenth century, for "CHRIST's sake," took place at La Salle; it was the SMITH-FIELD of the Cevennes.

The travelling party at an early hour reached Luissac, a small town of about fourteen hundred inhabitants; the Protestant Church there, rising on the banks of the Vidourle, in the noble simplicity of a Greek temple, is a beautiful building. Passing through the picturesque town of Sauve, built in an amphitheatre, with its tall houses clinging to the rocky heights, and surmounted by a dismantled tower of great antiquity, after an hour's rapid drive they came to Durfort, where the beautiful mountain views, incessantly changing with every furlong of road, would have fixed their whole attention, but for the animated spectacle of the population of Durfort, men, women, and children, in holiday garb, pouring out of the town in a body to the great fair of Sauve. Felix and his suite, for he carried much people with him, engineers, vine-dressers, and others, might have taken the town by surprise, for none but the sick and aged, with their nurses, were left in it; but the designs of the travellers not being hostile, they defiled rapidly through the empty streets, and hastened on by the lively valley of S. Felix to their destination.

And now the hum of La Salle's busy population is distinctly audible, and at length its

smoky chimneys and shadowy chesnut trees are in sight, and tired with the dust and heat of an August drive at noon, Suzanne is delighted to find herself on the terrace of Algue, beyond the town, and to receive the hospitable welcome of an affluent silk manufacturer, who, with much apparent satisfaction escorted his new kinswoman into his dwelling, an elegant villa on the banks of a rivulet, shaded by trees of noble growth, and surrounded by meadows delightfully fresh, and orchards, heavy with every description of apple common to the South of France.

We have said nothing of Suzanne: we fear to do her injustice. Imagine, an agreeable looking young woman, of tall but slight figure, with eyes of a deep blue, and a profusion of fair hair; and then endow her with an upright mind and an affectionate heart; give her also the advantages of a good education, not only as to acquirements but as to mental discipline,—the right training of the feelings and the judgment, and as a preface to a Christian life imagine her to have had a happy home in childhood, and to retain all the warmth of heart and gentleness of spirit which such a home ought to create and cherish, and Suzanne is before you.

We venture to transcribe a paragraph of a letter from Felix to his friend Haddo in England, in which he makes mention of her. “—— I say

but little of my wife, as you will of course receive it as an *ex parte* statement; so I will only observe, that she is a pretty young woman, of frank and graceful manners, with a soft voice and a smile like sunshine; she is, moreover, a Christian, and one after your own heart, she comes to us, like many other good things, from Ban de la Roche; her father was a friend of Oberlin."

The population of La Salle are in easy, if not in opulent circumstances; throughout the summer balls and country festivals abound, and elegant carriages are to be seen passing to and fro on the roads to the valley; in winter, the wealthy families migrate to seek new pleasures at Montpellier, and La Salle relapses into a tame routine of life. But we should be deceived if we expect to find in this colony that an easy position shelters from vexation and harass. La Salle might, indeed, be a privileged corner of the earth; but the human heart is always at work for mischief of some sort, small or great, and when a young La Sallite acquires a certainty that he is to have a fortune of a field or two, and a few chesnut trees, he settles down into a complete state of inutility to himself and every one else. One passion only disturbs his monotonous existence, it is that which springs from the susceptible vanity of small towns; has any deviation from courtesy been committed by one of the community, he becomes

an object of hatred to a whole clan, he is everywhere shunned, and if met in the one long street of La Salle, that has few lateral openings for escape, a La Sallite has been known to turn back and go a mile out of his way, rather than elbow the obnoxious personage in the narrow trottoir; and if met at the house of a common acquaintance, the offended party abruptly quits the room into which the delinquent is introduced. Indeed, so hard are the La Sallites to be won, that this childish rancour becomes in some cases entailed property, and descends, with the chesnut trees, from one generation to the next. How silly it all appears to talk of, but how common in little towns and provincial circles, is some such folly as that of the La Sallites, "*who, measuring themselves by themselves are not wise.*"

But it must not be supposed that nonsense of this sort interrupted the pleasure of the evening party on the terrace of Algue. There all was festivity and harmony: dance and song beguiled the hours, animation played on the countenances of the guests, and the *law of kindness was on their lips*. To Suzanne the entertainment seemed perfect. To make new friends was to her to gain the *gold of Ophir*. Light of heart, and fleet of foot, she threaded with graceful step the favourite dance of the district, and laughed with the young or listened to the old, with a ready attention that

made her the delight of the circle, and it was long before the pleasures of the evening were forgotten by hosts or guests.

Suzanne was much interested with an account given by her host of a visit he had recently paid to Beaucaire during the period of its great annual fair.

The castle of Beaucaire is of great antiquity, and goes back with its recollections to the days of Roman rule. It is supposed to have been built from the ruins of the ancient *Ugernum*. A fine Roman way leading straight from Beaucaire to Nismes has been discovered, marked by the well-known military distance stones. The position of Beaucaire commanding the Rhône, from the square platform surmounting a lofty eminence—smooth and ready for the building, as if it had been levelled by modern railway makers—gave it, throughout the feudal wars, immense importance as a fortress for offence and defence; many tragical stories, in which the names of the Counts of Toulouse enter profusely, illustrate the records of the Castle of Beaucaire; but we have no time just now to rummage its muniment room, and only desire, as we lean over the low parapet wall of this now somewhat dilapidated edifice, to sketch the singular, almost unique scene, stretching out beneath, of the GREAT FAIR of BEAUCAIRE, as it presents itself to the spectator, of a July evening.

Here is the Rhône, half hidden beneath a flotilla of slight embarcations, freighted with the manufactures of the North, and the fruits of the South; and yonder is the new suspension-bridge vibrating beneath the living mass, incessantly undulating from one bank to the other; whilst down below, at the bottom of the valley, commanded by the castle, under a canopy of glittering dust, are the crowd—the busy restless crowd;—the mixed multitude, hurried, breathless, noisy,—circulating round and round the shops, the date-merchants, jewellers, milliners, booksellers, Levant and India dealers, the popular theatres, the menageries, the mountebanks, the dwarfs, the giants, the monsters of every nation and region, all collected for the general amusement of the populace of the South of France, on this their annual Saturnalia.

From amidst this moving mass, the constant swaying to and fro of which actually makes the spectator giddy, rises an atmosphere of tobacco smoke and steam, blended with the sounds of twenty discordant orchestras. Elsewhere, far to the left lies the city, calm and still; but it is there that the real business of the fair is transacted. There from Vivarais and the Cevenol comes the silk grower with the precious product, raw from the insect-spinner; there, too, comes the manufacturer from Lyons and from Nismes, with the

last year's purchases of material, woven by their looms into marvels of industry; and there, too, comes the American, with his dollars and cents, to buy and carry across the Atlantic these gorgeous fabrics to pile the floors of the warehouses of the Broadway of New York, and to decide, by his purchases the fate of many a French artisan's household, for poverty or competence, during the coming winter.

At length night falls, or to speak more correctly, night dawns, for it is here robbed of shade and silence; all around earth lays wrapped in sable robe, whilst a luminous, almost a phosphoretic atmosphere glitters over the fair, and buzzing rise its many voices in ceaseless din through the livelong night.

But the first of August comes, and in the twinkling of an eye disperses the immense bivouac, and restores silence and solitude to Beaucaire, until the roll of the seasons brings round again the last week of July.

Early on the morrow Felix and Suzanne started on their southward journey. Their reception at La Salle had been so cheerful, it was not without regret they saw its last tall chimney disappear behind the trees, but their route lay through a richly cultivated district, well deserving admiration. It was the eve of the vintage, and the clustering bunches of grapes looked beautiful nestling

amid the pale green leaves. The road was bordered for miles by rows of wide-spreading cherry-trees, that attain here a size unknown in England, peach trees, fuller of fruit than leaves, and olives, now rather neglected, but forming a fine contrast to the lighter hues of contiguous trees.

By a rapid and almost dangerous descent the party turned into the brisk little town of Sommières, formerly a Roman settlement, but now noted for its fine wool manufactory, where steam-engines, and all the useful innovations of the age are adopted.

Felix had no time to spare, and the heat of noon was too oppressive for sight-seeing, or he would have ascended to the observatory at the top of the old castle, which commands a perfect map of the winding course of the Vidourle; he hastened on with his party to Lunel, a town about twice the size of Sommières, situated in a low marshy district. Lunel in winter is all water, in spring all dust, in summer all flies, and in autumn all fever. It was the fly season at this time in Lunel, and the greatest admirer of southern scenery must have admitted that the flies prevented Provence from being a complete paradise. Lunel owes the prosperity it has long enjoyed to its canal, and to its great fabrication of wine and brandy. There is a pretty botanical garden at Lunel, where many foreign plants are carefully cultivated.

Following for a space the banks of the Vidourle, our friends, at length, by a melancholy and stony road reached Gallargues; the stranger who perceives only the backs of a few houses and hears no noise, asks if he be really entering a town of many thousand inhabitants, but, with the words in his mouth, turns abruptly into a broad straight street with handsome buildings on either side.

Going beyond the ramparts, through narrow and less regular streets, we come to a terrace in front of the Protestant church. From the steps of this church the eye takes in a view that it is worth crossing France to behold.

One vast plain is before us, rolling on from the foot of Gallargues to the Mediterranean; this expanse is covered by hues of every colour and shade. Amidst these diversified tints we may discern Marsillargues, with its sharp belfry and tufted alleys; Aimargues, with its straight and narrow streets; St. Lawrence, surrounded by its corn mills; Vauvert, thrown up on a hill, like a monstrous heap of stones; Beauvoisin, with its commanding castle; Caylar, with its wide-stretching meadows; Mus, with its renowned quarries; Cadogan, winding down towards the high road like a serpent uncoiling itself in the beams of a scorching sun; the tower of Carbonnière, with its gaping porch, through which the high road runs; Aigues-mortes, half-hidden behind the Tower of Constance;

farther on, the estuaries, with their light mists; and, finally, the sea, that, lost in the clouds, seems to draw our gaze upward towards heaven. What manner of men ought they to be who worship their CREATOR from this church!

But to the north we have also a remarkable landscape. The contrast is complete; there are the brown tints of the wooded heights of Nîmes; the dark hues of the Cevennes; the windings of the Vidourle; the sharp and threatening crest of the Pic de St. Loup, and yet beyond, the mountains of Lozère, white with frost, and glittering beneath the fiery beams of the sun. And when we look through the telescope, planted at the telegraph that surmounts the castle, we see clearly on to the TOUR MAGNE of Nîmes, and yet farther on, in the same direction, to the castle of Beaucaire. But we must not idly keep on gazing. Felix, having hastily transacted the business that took him to Gallargues, is anxious to hurry on to Aiguesmortes, that he may give Reuben, a nephew of Suzanne, an intelligent boy of about fourteen years of age, with a strong historical appetite, and a prodigious memory, an opportunity to see the Tower of Constance, that has attained so grievous a notoriety.

Surrounded by water, and almost isolated from the rest of France, the territory of Aiguesmortes presents a peculiar aspect that carries the imagi-

nation back to remote times and distant countries. The immense tower that commands the city, and the lofty ramparts, with their loopholes and battlements, picture forth the old system of fortification in the by-gone days of chivalry. Going beyond the town, in the direction of the sea, we may almost fancy ourselves transported to the wastes of Africa. The eye discerns nothing but gloomy pine forests, intermixed with swamps and sandy plains. The soil is infested by venomous reptiles; clouds of insects thirsting for blood, whirl about in the air; indomitable bulls, living on these muddy pastures, stop at the sight of a traveller, and rush roaring upon him with their menacing horns; whilst squadrons of white horses, roaming about without an owner, feed contentedly on the nasty, salt herbage of the marshes. And, if we walk a short distance inland, we find one resemblance more, to the land of the Moor and Bedouin, in the *mirage*—the phenomenon that so cruelly distressed the French soldiers during their Egyptian expedition.

A pleasant pool of water is before us, in which the reflections of trees and shrubs are visible; we advance: it recedes; we hesitate, but go on, for water is a luxury here of price, and it seems too real for mockery. Again the illusion vanishes, to spread out its attractions still farther, and farther on; weary and exhausted, we give over chase,

but with a half feeling at last, that water is somewhere before us, if we only had patience to go on yet a little farther still.

When we reach the entrance of the Tower of Constance, and think that it was long employed solely as a prison for women and children, the victims of religious persecution, we cannot repress painful emotion. Little children often were imprisoned here ;—so late, even, as to the latter half of last century.

Lewis the Fourteenth, at the summit of his power, victorious over all enemies, and passing by turns, and re-turns, from love to devotion, undertook to convert all the Protestants in his kingdom ; the law that had given them protection, commonly called *The Edict of Nantes*, was revoked ; the exercise of their worship was prohibited to Protestants, and they were also forbidden to emigrate. Those who were surprised clandestinely hearing a sermon, if they escaped the sword, were sent like the lowest criminals to the galleys. Their property was confiscated, their houses were razed, and their wives and daughters were condemned to perpetual seclusion.

During this atrocious persecution, which scarcely slackened throughout the reign of Lewis the Fourteenth, or that of his successor, and which was, at last, only stopped by the general horror with which it inspired the mass of the French

nation, the Tower of Constance always contained within its walls many Protestant women, huddled together in one room; (the Tower had but two rooms, one over the other, where air and light could scarcely penetrate;) fed on the coarsest nourishment, and deprived of all the most indispensable conveniences of life, these women saw the whole of their miserable existence waste away without consolation, or hope.

Perhaps the latest authority, as to the actual condition of these sufferers, is M. de Boufflers, who, in the year 1768, accompanied the government agent, for the survey of the coast of Languedoc, to this vicinity, and himself visited the interior of the Tower. He thus describes, or rather thus declares his inability to describe, what he saw there.

“Colours,” he says, “are wanting with which to depict the horror of a sight so new to us; it was a picture, hideous but heart-lacerating, the interest of which was even heightened by the disgust it created.

“We saw a large round hall dimly lighted, and scantily ventilated, by one opening pierced through the roof, in which fourteen women, thus deprived of air and light, languished in misery and tears. The governor could scarcely repress his emotion. I still seem to see these women, at our sudden appearance, fall all at once at our feet, bathe them

with their tears, and then attempting to speak, find only sobs. Emboldened by our sympathy, they all narrated to us their common sorrows. Alas! their only crime was to have been brought up in the same religion as Henry the Fourth!

"The youngest of these martyrs was then more than fifty years of age; she was only EIGHT when seized as she was going to hear a sermon with her mother, and the punishment for it still continued."

Let us pause a minute to give rein to imagination, over this most disproportionate punishment. —Forty-two years' imprisonment for going to hear a sermon!—The criminal EIGHT years of age at the period of committing the offence! The country where she was imprisoned, and which she was forbidden again to gaze upon, one of the loveliest under the sun!—The nation to which she belonged the liveliest on the face of the earth!—What must have been her feelings at eighteen?—What at eight and forty?—I should like a portrait of her. Her story touches me.—To grow up within sound of the Mediterranean, but never to see it; within reach of the vines and olives of the South, but never to gather a leaf from a tree of any sort; or, to feel the blessed influences of earth, and air, and sky!—Could these fourteen women hear the bells from Aiguesmortes ring out for service?—

For service on Christmas Day! And how could they feel, and what could they think, when they heard

“Those chimes, those chimes of Motherland,
Upon a Christmas morn,
Outbreaking as the angels did,
For a REDEEMER born!”

How precious in the Tower of Constance must have been the passages from the Bible that, no doubt, many of these fourteen women could repeat! How keenly must they all have fed on the promises in Scripture of protection to all those who trust in God, *Who will make all things work together for good to those who love Him!* But how difficult must it have been to them to realise the truth of this to their hearts, under their mysterious punishment.

That youngest woman (I cannot forget her) was fifty in 1768, she would then be seventy in 1788. Did she live on to the time when ——. But we will not pursue such a subject, neither will we afflict ourselves longer about these fourteen poor women, who would all have died a natural death long before this, if they had been ever so happy here below; they have now passed away utterly from the theatre of this world, like the Plantagenets, or the Pharaohs, or the giants before the flood. They have finished their course,

and, *through much tribulation, have entered*—we trust—*on their rest.*

But it is well, sometimes, to take the visitation of others as a text on which to commune with our own hearts. We may, perhaps, not unprofitably ask ourselves, why we are promoted to better things? And whether, with every imaginable facility around us for worshipping God in His holy habitation, we leave our Churches empty day by day? Or, whether, duly valuing our privileges, we *wear the thresholds* of God's Courts whilst they are open to us?

Reuben looked grieved at the aspect of the Tower of Constance, and Felix, emerging from it, took a boat for the *Grau de Roi*, a cut from the Rhone, which figures among the important waterways for which the south of France is indebted to Louis XIV. The balmy air sweeping up from the sea was most refreshing; but as Felix brushed away, from time to time, the innumerable swarms of flies and gnats that roved about with fearful strength and malignity, he remarked gaily, that the *Tower of Constance* was at least a defence against *one* of the evils of life.

The row up the *Grau de Roi* presents little remarkable to the view, but our friends stepped ashore, more than once, to admire the flowers. The splendour of the plants peculiar to the shores

of the Mediterranean is noticed by all travellers, and Suzanne gathered a gorgeous bouquet as specimens for absent friends.

Occasionally they stopped to watch the forms and elegant movements of the fiery horses of dazzling white, or the rushing plunge of jet black cattle that, half wild, half tame, stared fiercely at the intruders, and then, vanishing from before them, fled with thundering gallop into the marshes. The aspect of this coast is peculiar to an European eye ; there are large pools of water, shapeless masses of land, broken dikes, high piles, and fishing tackle in quantities ; and ever in the distance the ancient walls of Aiguesmortes, sun-burnt, and stretching wide like a curtain, before the blue horizon of the Cevennes.

CHAPTER II.

NISMES.

THE character of a landscape is not derived altogether from lines, colours, and perspective. The remembrances connected with it; the races that people it; the sounds peculiar to it, either sad or joyful; the air breathed in it, that braces the traveller with fresh energy, or enervates him with luxurious perfume;—all these, and many other adjuncts, so vary the impressions a landscape can convey to the mind, that we may say scenery derives its influence over the imagination from moral, as well as from physieal causes.

The state of the atmosphere, and the laws of light, play an important part in these natural causes, and greatly modify a landscape to an erudite eye. Thus, all attentive travellers remark that the landscape in the South is essentially distinct; this it owes to the greater purity of the air, and to the intensity of the direct light. The eye takes in at once all the details of the picture; the more distant points are as precise as those

nearer ; the sky assumes the deep and steadfast blue of a perfect sapphire, from east to west over the vault, and the trees and buildings stand out so eagerly to notice, we may fancy them moveable property.

The landscape in the north, on the contrary, is more romantic ; the continuous rains, and the heavier mists rising up from the earth, often effect the sacrifice of one corner of the picture, to bring out the rest, and so graduate the altitudes, from the feet of the observer up to the shadowy horizon, that the points of attraction seem multiplied indefinitely, whilst a vague feeling of space and mystery finds its way to the heart.

It was during a drive to the Roman aqueduct, now known by the title of the *Pont du Gard*, that these observations on scenery were made by Felix,—his audience being Suzanne, his wife, with the boy Reuben, and Haddo, now his guest from England. Felix went on to commend the scenery of his own country, as combining excellencies.—

“Nature,” he said, “is peaceful, though sleepy, in Holland ; rich, in Belgium ; verdant, trim, and lively, in England ; poetic and melancholy, in Scotland ; but in the South of France there is a blending of beauties. Gascony presents a stream that reflects the rays of the setting sun throughout its length, and that fattens a soil, redundant

in fruit, and animated by populous villages, thickly planted along its windings. I ever loved the Garonne from a child; it is the most joyous river to look upon that waters the earth.—

“—The bright Garonne! that on 'midst flowers and laughter,

With sunshine, like a banner streaming after,

Kisses the Atlantic past Bordeaux's fair walls,

No lovelier stream than which to ocean falls.”

Here Felix, sinking back into prose, went on—

“In the Albigeois district there are sterile plateaux, it is true, but these are interspersed with valleys where Nature, showering down treasures, forms sites so delicious, the heart is fain to crave to live in them for ever.

“In Ardèche the views become sharp and fantastic; the soil is heaved up by volcanic fires; forests tenant the basins of craters, and fountains spring out of basaltic colonnades.

“In Provence the scenery assumes an entirely Southern garb; there is the sky of *'molten brass'*; there are rocks, grey in the shade, golden in the sunshine; plains covered with the stunted olive, and vales with the fertility of Canaan.

“But, give me above them all,” he said, “the landscape of the Pyrenees! Here we see frowning crags and lofty terraces, where we breathe the balmy breath of the South, beneath the magic of a clouded sky. This is, indeed, a privileged

region. Here the poet stands wrapt in mute enthusiasm, whilst the painter throws away his pencil, and despairs of his art."

Suzanne now eulogised rural scenery in England, as combining much to awaken religious feeling.

"What I most admire in it is," she said, "the village church, standing rather apart though at no great distance from the cottages of the labourers, half hidden by the foliage of a clump of elms,—that '*undissenting tree*,' as the author of the Christian Ballads calls it,—or venerable oaks, and draped in its rich mantle of ivy; its architecture, if not always admirable for its regularity, is yet imposing, and often noble and harmonious. Its little belfry lifts itself up with seignorial importance, and its great east window, with its fragments of gorgeous blazonry, is there, to attest the piety of our ancestors, who endowed with gifts the house of God before they roofed their own with cedar. A country churchyard in England is a healing sight, so different to the cemeteries in our warmer climes. It seems like home to a sorrowful heart! As we traverse it to go to the house of prayer it cannot fail to awaken pious thoughts in all who are accessible to gentle influences, and to soften the feelings of those who beneath its green hillocks have deposited friends with whom their earthly hopes lie buried, but

from whom they rejoice to be reminded they are separated only for a time.—

“ ‘ And ever the bells in the green churchyard,
Are tolling to tell ye this ;
Go pray in the church, while pray ye can,
That so ye may sleep in bliss.’ ”

Here Haddo volunteered his reminiscences of scenery.—

“ I shall not soon forget,” he said, “ a little voyage I made up the Y in Holland a few months ago. I embarked at Amsterdam with intent to increase the throng of visitors to the shed where Peter the Great worked as a shipwright. The sky was cloudless ; the little arm of the sea glittered with the first beams of the day, and I could count at three miles’ distance to the south, all the belfries of Amsterdam, and to the north the thousand windmills that people the shores of Zaardam. Presently, the advancing sun drew up the mists, and night suddenly shrouded the whole country. But the light veil that hid the horizon from us, and for a moment plunged our bark in desert space, where we saw beneath only the green billows, and for canopy, the colourless void, reserved for us a multitude of detached views, of which the mist itself was the background and the frame. As our boat made way, new vignettes abruptly entered our field of vision ;

first, I saw approach, growing larger as it came on, the hull of a gigantic vessel, beaten by the heaving of the sluggish waves; further on it was a tongue of land covered with clumps of willows, and decorated with a villa in Chinese style; elsewhere, void and nothingness. Then came boats, carrying peasants from North Holland, wearing the costume of the days of Rembrandt and Teniers; then, after another interval of void, came a black and worm-eaten pile, and above it a sea-bird, awkwardly balancing itself over the abyss. At length, a fresh of wind rending the veil, disclosed to us, beneath its scattered fragments, close a head the quay of Zaardam, and the living multitude that hourly throng it. Since this voyage I have comprehended the degree to which a cloudy atmosphere may diversify the landscape; now bringing forward its details, one by one, and now, imparting to the whole, the charm of that aerial perspective of which southern views are often destitute."

"Nay, my respectable friend," said Felix, "this is beyond all licence; it puts you without the pale of civilized life altogether; to boast of Dutch mists beneath the sky of Languedoc! The scenery of Holland, forsooth, when you have the Cevennes to the north, the Mediterranean to the south, and a world of varied creations between; hill and valley, gushing fountain and living river,

glorious old towers and gigantic aqueducts, the everlasting architecture of imperial Rome, and all clothed in one dazzling robe of gold and emerald!

"If clouds are, indeed, your delight, do have the article good of its kind. You merchant islanders are wont to seek the best of everything for your warehouses; go to Montpellier for clouds; there, the sky is the picture, and the earth, only the frame to it. You should see Montpellier on a summer's evening from the promenade of Peyrou;—that beautiful terrace, stretching like a promontory into the luxurious valley it commands, spanned by its immense aqueduct, with its series of graceful arches; the purity and warmth of the sky give this view at all hours an indefinable charm, but at the close of day, when the outlines of the landscape are drowned in an ocean of mists, urging up in one direction, and a cloud of gold, fervid as if it must be pure metal, and reducible to ingots, meeting and fusing with it from another, then, O! cloud-loving Haddo! there is, indeed, wherewith to expatiate upon."

Haddo attempted "*to explain*," but the "*House*" would not hear him.

"See," said Suzanne, who had been watching the sky for some instants, "the brightness of the day has departed. You have affronted Sol; he looks heavily upon us." As she spoke fast came

the mists from every point of the compass, darkening with a malignant scowl the sky that but just now was one expanse of blue, and before there seemed time to say, "Present! Fire!" down came the artillery of a whole squadron of clouds, stuffed to the muzzle with hailstones of every shape and size, whilst one long, solemn, peal of thunder, roofing the district with its weight of sound, added to the awe of the moment. A rushing wind set in at the same time, and almost swept the travellers out of the carriage, as it stopped for shelter at a cottage by the road-side. Outrageous storms are so common in the south of France that they attract but little attention from the inhabitants, and the inmates of the cottage, after greeting the new comers with the ease and courtesy habitual to French peasantry, continued their avocations, without evidencing much anxiety as to what was transacting out of doors. The family were curiosity finders for the Museum in the Garden of the Fountain at Nismes; they were then engaged in stuffing, or preparing for stuffing, an Ibis, lately caught in the vicinity of Beaucaire. The existence of this bird on European territory is scarcely suspected; it belongs so historically to the shores of Lower Egypt, that we naturally associate it with pyramids, and hieroglyphics, and such like African productions; but it is, occasionally, to be met with in the Department of Gard, and, perhaps,

elsewhere, on the southern coast of France. The French Ibis is about the size of a Curlew, to which it has some resemblance; its plumage, at a distance, appears black, or very dark, but seen near, has a shiny green tinge, shading into purple. It has no feathers on the top of the head; its beak is broad, bent at the extremity, and curved inwards throughout its length. The variety of Ibis that the Egyptians venerated, is white; but, save in colour, is in all respects similar to the black one.

A Flamingo, also, obtained due admiration from the travellers. This beautiful tropical bird is every now and then to be seen, with thousands of other aquatic birds, hovering over the estuaries in the vicinity of Aiguesmortes; ranged in file in the waters, it takes flight at the least noise, and opens its fire-coloured wings to the rays of the sun. It is grand to behold a flock of these beautiful birds sweeping over the swamps of Aiguesmortes, the dazzling whiteness of their bodies, and glorious hues of their out-stretched wings, resplendent against the deep azure of the sky of Languedoc; when seen in order of battle, with lengthened neck and restless eye, defended against attacks by watchful sentinels, they give to these peculiar plains one resemblance more to the shores of Lower Egypt.

A Praying Mantis now attracted the attention of the party. This mysterious winged insect is

so difficult to catch, a young naturalist has small chance of adding it to his stores. Its colour, which resembles grass when scorched by the sun, is its protection. This little animal enjoys an extensive celebrity. The Hottentots worship it; the Chinese make a sign-post of it, and, when they lose their way, request the Mantis to point it out to them by moving a leg in the direction to be taken to regain it; and the Limousins of the Nineteenth Century, consider it sacred, and make a case of conscience of killing it. This Mantis had been caught alive, and was shut up in a glass box, through which its movements could be studied. It sat upon its hind legs in an upright position, and, stretching out its fore-paws, gesticulated like a preacher, and then clasped them like a penitent in prayer. It derives its name from this action.

The Mantis is, however, a voracious creature; if you offer it a living fly, it immediately puts aside its devotion, rushes upon it with incredible avidity, and gobbles it all up at once, except the wings, which it scatters to the wind. A few hours only after coming out of the egg you may see the young thing lift up its little arms in defiance, and run after its prey with incredible fury. There are several varieties of the Mantis; the most curious are to be met with in Asia, where they present singular imitations of flowers and leaves.

A child, on a couch in this general-purpose room, now called off every one's attention ; its light blue eyes turned upward, seemed as if fixed on some glorious object, from which it could not withdraw them ; "*c'est beau*," was faintly uttered by the lips of the attenuated little sufferer ; a slightly tremulous motion seemed to pass over the face, like a breeze ruffling the surface of still water, and the spirit departed, as the mother, surrounded by the members of the family and the strangers, stood with intense emotion by the bed.

" It's a fearful thing
To see the human soul take wing,
In any shape, in any mood."

The feelings of the parent, who was a widow, found relief at length in one passionate burst of tears ; she was carried into an adjacent apartment by her eldest son. Suzanne was deeply affected at the scene, and, after proffering such assistance and sympathy as circumstances permitted, returned in silence to the carriage. Haddo said a few words of benevolent import to the son, a fine young man with an engaging countenance ; he heard him politely, but by his manner negatived any advance towards religious conversation. The family were Roman Catholics ; they were in esteem in the vicinity for general good conduct, and were also noted for attachment to the tenets of their own Church.

The little girl, whose death had been so unexpectedly witnessed by strangers, was about eight years of age. She had been ill for nearly a year, but for a fortnight previously to her abrupt departure, had appeared reviving, and the mother had indulged a hope of restoration. The sad incident naturally touched the feelings of the travellers. Presently, their conversation turned towards the state of religious parties in Nismes.

Catholics and Protestants count more nearly equal numbers in Nismes than in any other city of France; family traditions and historical remembrances all hinge there on religious differences; and, from generation to generation, a spirit is perpetuated that divides society into two hostile camps, always in opposition, even in their amusements. The crowds of mechanics who pour out on Sunday evenings on the *Boulevards des Casernes*, never mix with the throngs that pace the *Boulevards de la Comédie*. There are honourable exceptions to all this, and the smoke of the steam engine, rushing along with the material interests of the century, tends to merge all differences, where higher causes do not exist to prompt the parties to live at peace with each other, and we speak rather of the past, than of the present, in saying thus much of the Nimois. A visit to Nismes was decided upon, as Haddo seemed interested in inquiring about it; meantime

our friends rapidly approached the *Pont-du-Gard*.

All travellers of taste, who have crossed the South of Europe, agree to consider the Roman Aqueduct, to which for ages the, rather, incorrect title of the *Bridge* of Gard has been given, as one of the most admirable monuments of antiquity. Its vast dimensions rival the proportions of the Coliseum, and the wild valley it crosses recalls the beautiful solitudes of Catania and Pæstum, whilst the bold, but elegant forms of its architecture, point it out as the work of a refined age, when it was the rule for useful things to be beautiful also, and when it was understood, that the strength of a gigantic structure, destined to survive for ages, may be concealed beneath a light and elegant exterior.

The party passed the village of Ledenon, commanded by the ruins of an old feudal castle, and surrounded by vineyards, that enjoy, in the neighbourhood, a deserved reputation. Presently they came to the village of St. Benet, situated at the base of a hill, peering out from behind a clump of poplars, shading a fine fountain. Farther on, by an abrupt turn amidst the rocks, they reached Lafoux, on the banks of the Gardon, that here rolls its scanty waters over a flinty soil; within sight is a pretty bridge, fastened by iron net-work, fine as a spider's web, to the capitals of four columns

in Egyptian style, opposite to the charming village of Remoulins, that seems proudly to count up each of its white houses, as they range along the northern bank of the stream.

From Lafoux to Pont-du-Gard the carriage moves tediously along in the sands, by a winding road; the eye impatiently seeks the approach to the aqueduct on the declivity of the mountain that still conceals it; at length, at a turn of the road, the Roman monument suddenly rises before the spectator, like an aerial and fantastic edifice, rather the effect of necromancy, than the production of human industry.

The Romans chose a singularly beautiful site for their gigantic aqueduct; there is the soft moss of green turf all round, with the clear deep blue of waters, shaded by groups of lovely beech trees and evergreen oaks; there are grottoes, as yet undisturbed by the geologist; and hills, whose gentle declivities are covered with heath, of many hues, and of exquisite fragrance. As the glance incessantly reverts to the fairy curtain, suspended as by an unknown power before us, at a distance graceful, but seen near, almost terrific in its immensity, hours fleet rapidly away; we quit this delicious spot with regret, ever hoping to see it again: having surveyed this grand monument by day, clothed as it were by the sunbeams in a dazzling robe of light, we desire to survey it also

reflecting the gentler rays of the moon, and casting its broad shadow over the banks of the Gardon, and down the sides of the hill.

The Bridge of Gard has been really a bridge, only since the beginning of the Seventeenth Century; but before that epoch it was a true Aqueduct, carrying on to Nismes the waters of two fountains, that of Arian near St. Quentin, and that of Eure near Uzès. In several places this water course was conveyed on arches, as we see to the north of the Bridge of Gard; elsewhere it crossed hills by subterranean passages, as we see to the south of this monument; elsewhere, again, it followed the curve of the hills by channels hollowed out down their declivities.

The Aqueduct is composed of three rows of arches of unequal proportions. The lower row has six standing, the second row eleven, and the highest thirty-five. The architecture of the Pont-du-Gard is simple, the decorations are few, and are restricted to symbolic representations. There is uncertainty as to the period of the erection of the Pont-du-Gard. The historian Ménard ascribes it to Agrippa, son-in-law to Augustus, who may have built it about the year 19 B.C., when he was deputed to arrange the affairs, and to quiet the movements of the Gauls. He adorned their territories with the four great roads that cross them, and it seems probable that he added the

Aqueducts, as he obtained at Rome the title of *Curator Perpetuus Aquarum*.

If the traveller is not afraid of giddiness, but, from the topmost flag-stones of the Aqueduct, has the courage to survey leisurely the beautiful horizon that surrounds this lofty observatory, he will see, to the west, a vale unfolding beneath him. The Gardon follows its windings, it is commanded by rocks of many colours, and is thickly wooded, here and there, with trees, whose broad tops cast towards sunset a delightful shade. To those who can dispose of an hour, the avenue of trees running through this valley offers an inviting promenade, it leads to the valley of St. Privat, whose moorish turrets overlook, in peace and solitude, the verdant turf. The noise of a mill, and the unceasing notes of the birds, disguise the extreme loneliness of this secluded mansion, and there is a rustic roof near where travellers may find hospitality.

The Castle of St. Privat is seldom occupied by its owners, but their steward, who represented them there, had instructions to place rooms in it at the disposal of Felix, who, with his party, took up his abode there for the night. A noble reception saloon, wainscoted with curiously carved oak, received the visitors to a meal in which the noted red-legged partridge of the district was a principal feature. Fine fruit from the conservatories of the

castle, and wine from the vineyards of Ledenon, the property of the lord of the château, completed the banquet, profusely, though hastily, set before them by the courteous seneschal. St. Privat is an enchanting spot; after wandering through the grounds, surveying the chapel, and the studio, in which some members of the family of the owner cultivated the fine arts with taste and effect, the party returned to the carved oak room, where a brilliant log fire flamed on the open hearth, which the damp of a September evening made grateful. The aroma of coffee, exquisitely prepared by the attentive steward, greeted them as they crossed the threshold, and the steady light of wax candles, of enormous size and great purity, beaming from a massive candelabrum, hastily brought out of the Strong-room, and placed on an antique marble support, at one end of the apartment, gave this old baronial hall a most comfortable appearance. The damp changed to rain, which pattered heavily on the windows; conversation became animated, every one seemed to enjoy himself, and a homeless wanderer looking in on them, from the deep oriel window, may have supposed them the happiest of earthly beings.

The steward introduced the Curé of the parish, a gentlemanly young man of much information, the circle comprised also Emilien, a protestant minister at Nismes, an old acquaintance of Felix,

who had arranged to meet him at St. Privat. Representatives of the opposite religions being in presence, conversation veered off from theology, whilst the statistics of the parties, and local anecdotes, formed the substrata of it. The Protestant Pastor,

"Famed for accumulated store
Of sacred and of Pagan lore,"

was led on to give some of his historical remembrances ; a sketch of Father Bridane found favour with his audience.

This extraordinary man, one of those who have nobly illustrated the south of France, was born, Emilien told them, at the little village of Chusclan in 1704; he possessed an energetic mind, and great warmth of feeling. Father Bridane appears in history like a grand and mysterious personage, preaching fasting and repentance, in searching language, amidst an age of luxury and corruption. Soon after his ordination he was sent to preach at Aiguesmortes during Lent; the inhabitants of Aiguesmortes appear to have been prejudiced against him, so, on Ash-Wednesday, after waiting in vain for hearers in the church, he went out of it, in his surplice, ringing a bell from square to square. At this spectacle every one stopped, and, curious to see what was to come, followed at his heels into the church. Bridane then ascended

the pulpit, and gave out a hymn on death, and as a reply to the bursts of laughter he excited, paraphrased this sad subject with a vehemence that presently caused boisterous derision to give place to silence, attention, and dread; his voice, strong and sonorous, it is said, could be heard by ten thousand persons. He made, with sustained celebrity, two hundred and sixty-five missionary tours during his life; and, with the exception of a few provinces in the North, there was scarcely in France, a town, hamlet, or village to which his apostolate did not extend. Bridane expired at Roquemaure, suddenly, after having exerted his strength in a mission to Villeneuve-les-Avignon. His Divine Hymns have gone through nearly fifty editions, and are still popular.

Here the Curé said he had pleasure in doing honour to the name of one eminent man of Emilien's fraternity, who might, for zeal and simplicity of purpose, be placed by the side of Father Bridane.

"I allude," continued the young priest, "to the late Mr. Gonthier, of Nismes;"—— he was proceeding, when a gentle noise from the side of the fireplace, being, in fact, a duet to the honour of Morpheus, attracted attention: Reuben, tired by the day's rambles, had thrown himself down on a couch of quaint device of ebony and crimson silk; a Newfoundland dog, with an intelligent physiog-

mony, dog-like, had formed an instantaneous friendship with the boy, and after licking his pendant hand, till it was well sponged all over, inside and out, had crouched down beside him, with his nose on the same cushion with the child's. The two faces seen in profile made an admirable picture; the broad fair forehead of Reuben, his curly chesnut hair, and his transparent complexion, now flushed to a deep carnation, showed to advantage bedded in the folds of Suzanne's rich India shawl that she had wrapped round her sleeping nephew, whilst the respectable black and white of his companion, whose honest countenance was also surmounted by a high and handsome forehead, formed a contrast of undeniable interest. The chaunting continued, rising and lulling at intervals, and the Curé travelled back to Nismes, carrying his hearers with him.

"The people of Nismes," he resumed, "seem more ready to die for their religion than to live for it. A fierceness in theology is their characteristic; but Mr. Gonthier was a man of another temper. In 1805 when he became protestant minister at Nismes, France had just emerged from the gloom of the revolution, and churches and chapels were almost every where deserted; amusement, business, war—every thing was god, except God. Mr. Gonthier essayed to gather the people again around their spiritual guides. 'Grant

me, O God,'—such was his constant prayer,—‘a voice as powerful as that which carries the multitude away from Thee!’ He was said to be a very attractive preacher; with a mind richly stored with multifarious knowledge, he had also a lively fancy; there was the impromptu of the South about him. He gave his whole heart to his work; from house to house he carried out his mission, Catholics, as well as those of—his own views,” said the Curé, slightly hesitating as to the designation of the Protestants, “gave him their confidence and good will; and he was often called in, as a peacemaker, by men of all ranks and religions. After the deaths of his beautiful wife and his graceful little daughter, his love for his fellow-creatures seemed to become even deeper and purer. He had peculiarly the gift (a scarce one) of living in the life of others.”

“Your remembrance of Mr. Gonthier pleases me,” said Haddo. “I knew him when he left the rich and industrious city to pursue the duties of life on a different theatre. In the chain of mountains separating the Swiss Cantons from France, in a long narrow gorge, is the small village of St. Cergues, on the route to Italy, as you coast along the Swiss shores of Leman. It was thither that Mr. Gonthier withdrew from Nismes, at the earnest entreaties of his parents, after the deaths of his wife and daughter. Sad to him was the

farewell to the orange trees, to the balmy air, to the quick and sprightly conversation of the south. The activity of the great city was replaced, for him, by the monotonous sound of the woodman's axe. From June to September, it is summer at St. Cergues, but the rest of the year it is miserably cold there. On visiting it from the French frontier, we pass from cherry-trees in full blossom, to the ice, and snows, and piercing cold of mid-winter. During the long winters Mr. Gonthier had no visitors, but in the few weeks of fine weather, friends and strangers hastened to see him; to find in that remote valley a man with the manners of society, an ornamented and wealthy mind, and an understanding versed in high matters; one who formed singularly correct opinions on men and things, and who, though living in retirement, was, nevertheless, as regarded prompt appreciation of the present, one of the world. In conversation he poured forth abundantly of his treasures. A walk with him in the environs of St. Cergues was delightful. He had an exquisite sense of the beauties of nature, and he had learned, from a divine teacher, to interpret the voice of earth when it speaks to us of the things of heaven. No one ever left Mr. Gonthier without having the mind raised and enlarged, and opened to new impressions.

“After the death of his father, whose sick bed

he assiduously attended, Mr. Gonthier said to a friend; 'We ought to be more and more imbued with this great truth; that there is for us but one thing desirable—to belong unreservedly to true Christianity, with a firm desire to submit to it every thought, every feeling, every action of our life.'

"Mr. Gonthier presently left St. Cergues, from failing health, to fill a less laborious post at Rolle.

"In the beginning of the present Century religious ideas were in progress. At the Restoration of the Bourbons, there was scarcely a country in Europe where some movement was not manifested, of which religion was the pretext or the object. This resumption of the old heritage of faith; this return to ancient beliefs, was, however, accompanied with fanatical outbreaks. Men's consciences were touched, but their tempers were irritated also, and families were suddenly aroused from routine habits and customary repose.

"Such was the state of things when, in 1818, Mr. Gonthier went to Rolle.

"Persuaded that the cause of religion would be the great interest of the Nineteenth Century, he saw in those who first entered on the field, the vanguard—I might almost say, the *forlorn hope*—of this great and holy cause. Their outbreaks neither surprised nor alarmed him: he

was contented to know the Church to be under a Safeguard, strong as well as holy.

"But I exhaust your patience," said Haddo, who talked on, forgetting he was not in the lecture-room, "without exhausting the measure of my admiration for Mr. Gonthier. This excellent personage, who was a hard-working man, as the editor of reprints of valuable portions of the writings of men of the preceding century, and who was marvellous for the extent of his charities, supplied from small resources, I was going to say, in conclusion, left Rolle for Nyons, adjacent to it, where the ministerial duties were very light; his strength gradually failed, and, losing in succession, wife, children, sisters, and nieces, all who entered his circle of domestic love, he expired, after great bodily sufferings, retaining to the last his fine mind and affectionate heart, on the 26th of May, 1834, at the age of sixty-one."

"I like your stories, Haddo," said Reuben, looking up from his couch, and rubbing his eyes; "you go right on to the grave-stone at the end, and the *aged so much*, and *here lieth*."

"It is an end that will soon come to the youngest of us, my boy," returned Haddo; "and may you, when your earthly career is ended, earn as fair an epitaph as did the good man we have been talking of; for he died at peace with God;

trusting to his Redeemer for life hereafter, and blessing his fellow-creatures, to whom his life here below had been useful."

"Cousin Haddo," said Reuben, earnestly looking at him, and showing, in the depth of his beautiful hazel eyes, that mysterious sympathy and sweetness of expression, blended with preternatural power of intellect, so often manifested by those who finish their work early, and, passing away in spring-time, have little to do with the cares of life, and *the burden and heat of the day*, "I LOVE EVERYBODY."¹

"Then, be ready," said Haddo, "to pass into eternity, trusting to the love of your Redeemer. You may, indeed, my dear child, yourself soon quit this world, for human life at your age is very fragile; but should it be His good pleasure to prolong your life here below, set yourself heartily to love Him and to serve Him, since you must, inevitably, one day appear before Him, either as a child, or a grown-up man, or, at latest, as an old man. To His goodness I commend you. But we are all looking to our friend Emilien," Haddo added, "for some of his historical recollections; I shall be in disgrace with Reuben, if I cannot prevail on him to give us some one of those narratives with which we know his memory is so abundantly stored."

¹ *The Confession of Faith*, on his death-bed, of W. M. R.; a lamented young kinsman of the writer; + 25 July, 1845; aged fourteen years and six months.

"The war of the Camisards," said Emilien, bending deferentially to the speaker, "forms a long and sad legend in the history of our Southern Provinces. The episode that I will borrow from it, as you are positive in sending me back to our Chronicles, is, in its nature, so little hostile to any religious convictions, and yet bears so strongly the stamp of the times, that I may offer it for your amusement without being accused of a desire to rekindle feelings of animosity between two portions of society."

Here the earnest attention of the listeners, who simultaneously narrowed their circle as he spoke, proved the popularity the narrator enjoyed with them.

EMILIEN'S STORY.

The Franciscan Convent at Nismes has no longer its great arched gateway, or its lofty walls, or its tower pierced with barbicans; its gardens, now shaded by trees, sprang, perhaps, from the seeds of those that covered it in 1704, no longer resound with the chant of the monks, or the clash of arms, or the gracious and courtly voice of Marshal Villars, or the soft voice of Cavalier, or the rough voice of Commissioner Baville; its solitudes are silent, or are broken only by the sports of a group of young students from an adjacent seminary. But on the 16th of May, 1704, the Franciscan Convent at Nismes was

busy enough. The population of Nismes seemed on that day preparing for a fight or a festival. A truce had been proclaimed, yet a few volunteers were to be seen furbishing up their arms for future aggression or defence. But general occupation on this day seemed suspended, and a blending of curiosity and terror was depicted on every countenance. The populace, half in military, half in holiday garb, poured on towards the city gates, and rolled out in waves up the dusty road leading to St. Cæsar.

Strange sentences jumbled together fell on the ear as the people pressed forwards.

"Perhaps he will not come."—

"Perhaps the traitor is afraid."—

"He is about as tall as an olive-tree."—

"He is a mean-looking man."—

"He is nothing, after all, but one of farmer Lacombe's shepherd boys."—

"He was a journeyman baker at Geneva," and so on.

But other words were exchanged in a lower tone, whispered with precaution by well-dressed women, evidently drawn into the crowd by a deeper feeling than curiosity.

"Is it possible that Cavalier has accepted a conference with Marshal Villars to betray us?"

"Can it be true that he will sell us for a regiment in Spain?"

“Keep close; range yourself here; we may be able to touch the edge of his coat.”

The populace, tired of waiting, travelled on up the high road to meet him, but in their eagerness to see the formidable chief of the Camisards, they were a day too soon, for Cavalier, at the head of his infantry, and accompanied by fifty horsemen, by his young brother, and by several friends, halted at Langlade for the night.

Early the next morning Cavalier left with his suite, and between Caveirac and St. Cæsar met Lalande with hostages, being, La Duretière, captain of dragoons, with other officers and some soldiers; these Cavalier left at St. Cæsar, under guard of his infantry, commanded by Ravanel.

So the shepherd boy, we see, is going to treat with the delegates of the king as one power with another power.

Part of the cavalry of the Camisards advanced to within musket shot of Nismes, and encamped on the heights of Puech-d'Autel. Cavalier posted sentinels at every point whence his troop could be assailed; having made his arrangements he moved on towards the town.

This time, the day of arrival, as is often the case, the populace, who had been too soon the day before, were too late; it was not until the procession had reached the banks of the Cadereau, that the population of Nismes were aware the lion of

the Cevennes was at their gates. They then rushed on in one tumultuous breathless mass to the large square in front of the Franciscan convent, but under the cloud of dust they could discern neither the Camisard chief, nor his little brother, nor D'Aigaliers, (whom the Camisards thought a renegade, but who was a true man), nor Lacombe the farmer, nor Daniel Gui the favourite, but only his eighteen armed men who kept off the crowd, sword in hand, commanded by Catinat.

Cavalier cast a distrustful glance towards the gate of the convent; towards its windows, manned by Monks; towards its lofty walls that hid the trees of the garden; towards the high tower, pierced with barbicans, and towards the Marshal's guard, ranged in line down one side of the gateway.

At sight of this Cavalier posted his soldiers on the other side of the corridor, and strode on with firm steps towards the Marshal, who, with Commissioner Baville and Sandricourt, waited for him in the garden. They all three fixed their gaze on the Camisard chief, surprised at his youth and slight figure, and it was not until after a prolonged silence that the Marshal, approaching Cavalier, said to him with a gracious smile—

“I see, Mr. Cavalier; I have received your letters and expected you, but certainly, on behold-

ing you, I cannot refrain from thinking that you count more victories than years."

Cavalier answered :

"My lord Marshal.—I know not the language of courts, and your words embarrass me, but without pretending to reply to you in terms of suitable compliment, I will say I have always thought you to be loyal as brave, and I am here at your disposal."

Commissioner Baville here roughly interrupted, saying :

"Come, sir, make an end of this, and listen in silence to our orders, for the king, my master, must be very good to be willing to treat with rebels."

Cavalier returned :

"Mr. Commissioner.—It is not with you that I have come to confer ; and if this is all that I have to listen to here, allow me to withdraw."

"Rebels ! It is you, who by your tyranny and cruelty have alienated the children from the king ; but for you, should we ever ——"

Marshal Villars interposed.

"Gentlemen, be calm ; I am not come to reopen too recent wounds, but to heal them for ever ; delegated by a clement monarch I am here to announce to you his desire to spare the blood of his subjects, and to pursue gentle measures with them. Mr. Cavalier, what are your claims ?"

Cavalier answered :

“I have already stated them in writing ; I now repeat them. My lord Marshal, the children of the king suffer unjustly. Our churches are demolished ; your tower of Constance resounds with the cries of our wives and daughters ; our young men are hunted like wild beasts into the mountains ; our old men are suffocated in caves by the smoke of your piles ; our prayers and thanksgivings are everywhere desecrated and prohibited :—such are our woes and your crimes ; what you call my claims, ——”

He was proceeding when, for the second time, Baville interrupted with imperious language ; again the Marshal recalled him to the moderation suitable to his rank and to the important negotiation with which they were intrusted.

A conference followed that lasted for two hours ; but what passed at it has never transpired from that day to this. Cavalier said not one word of it to those around him at the time, and but little reliance can be placed on what he subsequently wrote about it. All that is certain, is, that Cavalier was made a colonel in the royal service in Spain ; that his troop of Camisards deserted him as a traitor, and that his brethren continued to languish in prisons and to suffer all the horrors of war.

Still the people waited at the gate of the Fran-

ciscan convent, and as the dust was now laid, everybody could behold Cavalier as he emerged from it, and could hear the Marshal say, as he took leave of him with a bland smile :

“ Farewell, my lord Cavalier.”

This man, who had kept a whole country in awe, was of small stature with delicate features ; he wore a complete suit of coffee-coloured cloth, with a very large white muslin cravat ; he rode a low grey horse, and uncovered to greet the crowd. As he lingered to speak to some persons who accosted him, it was observed that he showed a fine emerald on his finger, and displayed, somewhat unnecessarily, a gold watch, at that time a rarity in the Cevennes ; moreover, he drew from his pocket a valuable snuff-box, under semblance of familiarity with the populace as he presented it to those near him.

With firm but graceful tread, and ever hat in hand, Cavalier threaded the crowds surrounding the Convent Gardens ; he partook of a collation at an opposite mansion, thence he crossed the Esplanade to pay a visit to Gui Billard, the gardener. During this progress, two Camisards, sword in hand, cleared the way for him ; several ladies were now presented to him, who thought themselves fortunate in being able to touch the edge of his coat. Having recrossed the Esplanade, Cavalier and his suite began to sing psalms ; when they

reached the suburb of St. Cesar, Cavalier sent back the hostages.

Before he quitted Nismes, Cavalier told several persons that he never designed to revolt from the king, and that he was ready to shed the last drop of his blood in his service, provided liberty of conscience were granted to his co-religionists; but Cavalier was made a colonel without obtaining the deliverance of his brethren.

Was he a traitor, or was he betrayed?

"He was a traitor," said Reuben, springing up as he spoke, and dislodging Nep by the start, who, whether from sympathy with his friend's feelings on the subject of Cavalier, or from more personal motives, gave a hearty *bow wow* in response.

"Why was Cavalier a traitor?" said Emilien to Reuben.

"Because of the emerald ring, and because of the tower of Constance," said the boy.

"Reuben is right," said Felix; "he has seen the tower of Constance, and to place it in juxtaposition with the gem, is our best method of arriving at a judgment."

Reuben was so earnest with Emilien for more stories, that, to avoid the charge of moroseness, he commenced a tale of Lewis the Fourteenth, and the two fountains at Cabrières (a hamlet to the north of the Pont-du-Gard), whose waters are

famous for their medicinal properties ; but Reuben was presently so thoroughly conquered by sleep that he was glad to be consigned to the care of the steward, who allotted him a charming little apartment, "*cheerfully situate*," as advertisements would have it, near some inhabited rooms. A fire took off from the solemnity, to a child, of a strange room in an ancient house, and a series of pictures, illustrating the life of S. Francis de Sales, afforded matter for reflection to a youthful inmate of the comfortable apartment.

Nep trotted off at the same time with Reuben ; where *he* slept we have no authority for stating, as no bulletin on the subject has reached us : all we can authenticate about it, is, that at daybreak on the ensuing morning, two faces, that of the boy with the bright eyes, curly chesnut hair, and carnation-coloured cheeks, and that of the dog, with the high forehead and black and white chevelure, were descried by the gardener, as he sought for breakfast cress in a rivulet hard by, looking out of the lozenge-shaped panes in the long, narrow window of Reuben's room, apparently in admiration of the Roman arches, as they loomed in the distance from amidst the heavy autumn mists.

From medical anecdote conversation in the saloon turned to Medical Schools, and the noted establishment at Montpellier was discoursed of.

"The date of its foundation is unknown," said the Curé; "but it must have been remote, since St. Bernard, in a fragment of a letter extant, speaks of the celebrity of the physicians of that city in the twelfth century. He says, speaking of a certain Archbishop of Lyons, who fell sick on his road to Rome, that he turned out of his way to go to Montpellier, where he expended with the physician, not only *all that he had*, but also *much that he had not*. In 1220 Montpellier received a distinct organisation, for which it was indebted to Cardinal Conrad, whom Honorius III. sent thither at that epoch as legate."

"Montpellier is, then," said Haddo, "one of the oldest chartered corporations in Christendom. Esculapius has his honours."

"And deserves them," said Suzanne.

"He certainly receives them at Montpellier, now, as heretofore," said Emilien. "We survey almost with veneration the ancient façade of the School of Medicine there, surmounted by its little moorish turrets. We cross a bridge, as if we were entering a castle, and in the vestibule are greeted by a doorkeeper, who offers to escort us through this sanctuary of science. We pass through rooms where students are taking lessons in every department of medicine. Farther on, we traverse a circular hall, filled with the busts of men who have illustrated science, and who

rest there in their glory. Thence we enter a library, the 35,000 volumes of which the eye will be satisfied to take in at a rapid glance. There are manuscripts of great value in this library; among them are some in the handwriting of Queen Christina; and there is a sketch of the Jerusalem Delivered of Tasso, transcribed by his own hand.

"But what peculiarly characterises this School of Medicine, is the Anatomical Museum. Here all the deformities of nature are mimicked by art with awful verity. It is, no doubt, a great lesson out of one of the most interesting pages of the book of creation. It is a story that concerns each of us closely; nevertheless, but few of us care to know much of the interior of the palace we inhabit.

"On emerging from the Museum, we may chance to meet, in one of the long galleries of the building, a procession, moving on slowly and solemnly; it is a licentiate going to pass his examination for a degree. He makes his way through the crowd clad in a patched robe that is itself an historical monument. Rabelais wore it on the day of his reception; since then, the numerous pieces that have been added to it, have usurped the whole place of the primitive stuff."

"Which thus," interposed Haddo, "becomes like Sir John Cutler's stockings, of classical memory, which, originally of worsted, were darned

so frequently with silk, as to eventually become a pair of silk stockings, and to serve as an illustration of the preservation of personal identity, in an argument between the wits of the age."

"So, in like manner," continued Emilien, "does the robe of Rabelais remain ever the same robe, and would tell us so, if it could speak. A sort of allegorical personage heads or tails this procession. With his measured tread he reminds us of one of Molière's mace-bearers; it is a beadle, wearing the livery of the College. Over his right shoulder he holds an enormous club, round which twines the serpent of Esculapius.

"The visitor to Montpellier, however, hastens with alacrity out of this building to the Botanical Garden. I am partial to the Botanical Garden at Montpellier; nature has done much for it as well as art. Above the conservatories, the firs, and the cypress trees, are gothic steeples, with a Saracenic tower, surmounted by a few small pine trees, growing horizontally, sprung from seeds brought by the birds, and which are not to perish, as it is said, until the destruction of Montpellier. In this Garden we seem as if transported to another latitude; the air is redolent of the perfumes of the tropics; and we see there butterflies and insects buzzing round the banana-tree, the sugarcane, and the large-leafed magnolia.

"This Garden, the first of its kind with which

France was endowed, was founded by Peter de Belleval, a Professor of Botany, who devoted his whole fortune to the creation of it. He lived about the beginning of the Seventeenth Century. In this garden is the tomb of a young English lady, the adopted daughter of an Anglican Priest, Dr. Young, author of the *Night Thoughts*. Out of a shady path the stranger turns round to notice a small grotto, excavated in a rock, and closed in by lattice-work; on lifting up the screen we see, at the farther end of the recess, a white marble tablet, to commemorate the sad fate of the young foreign lady, who, dying at Montpellier, whither she had been carried in search of health, under the regime of the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, was refused a grave in consecrated ground.

“From the city of Montpellier, we pass on to the promenade of Peyrou by a bridge and under a triumphal arch. The aqueduct that crosses the plain of Peyrou is the work of Henry Pilot, whom France counts among her best engineers. This monument, though, has been much criticised; but, perhaps, its fault is its youth; it cannot claim to have subsisted through twenty centuries of revolutions and tempests. Meantime, as a candidate for longevity, it renders service to Montpellier, by bringing to a considerable elevation a vast body of water supplied by the

fountain of St. Clement, situated five or six miles from the city.

“Montpellier has always been popular with travellers from the North ; it has many attractions : it is a School of science for the learned ; a hot-house for the delicate in health ; and to the poet it is the land of the Troubadour, and the home of the sweet sounds of the *Œc* Language.”

“What great names connected with science have illustrated Montpellier ?” inquired Haddo.

“The first that occurs to me,” returned Emilien, “is that of Astruc, a man eminent for varied acquirements, as well as for medical skill.

“John Astruc was born at Sauve, 19th March, 1684, of a noble family ; he studied at Montpellier, and took his degree of Master of Arts in 1700, and his Doctor’s degree in 1703. At the age of eighteen, he published a Treatise on Fermentation, the merit of which, to judge aright, we should remember that chemistry was then in its twilight ; but even the errors of Astruc had something grand in them, and announced what he was one day to become. Astruc pursued a course for the acquirement of knowledge, very different from what was then adopted, and in this consisted his true merit. He dismissed hypothesis, and in hospitals, and by the beds of the sick, studied disease in its facts.

“Notwithstanding the progress of science, se-

veral of Astruc's treatises are still worth reading. In his Natural History of Languedoc, we find some highly interesting observations on the intermitting fountains of the district, and also a dissertation on the retreat of the sea at Aiguesmortes.

"Astruc taught medicine, as well as practised it, at Montpellier; his style was terse and correct; he possessed pre-eminently the art of imparting instruction in lectures.

"The king granted him a pension, and appointed him Inspector of the mineral waters of Languedoc. The plague of 1721 gave a new opportunity for a display of the erudition and skill of Astruc. Then, as since, medical men were divided into *contagionists* and *non-contagionists*; the latter were for the destruction of the lazarets. Astruc sided with the first, whose opinion prevailed.

"After a visit, at request, to the court of the King of Poland, Astruc definitively settled in Paris. Honours awaited him in that capital, where he was made physician to the king. The acquirements of Astruc were so varied, that a wit said of him: '*That man knows everything, even medicine.*'

"He was far and wide in repute. A great king wrote to one of his friends, who was ill: '*I am easy as to your fate, for you have Astruc for your physician.*'

"Little has been preserved respecting the pri-

vate life of Astruc. He is said to have devoted every leisure moment of many years of his life to the education of a son. He died 5th May, 1768, at the age of eighty-four. The faculty of Medicine of Paris placed his bust in the amphitheatre there."

The Curé here remarked upon the alteration in the aspect of medicine since the period when it was surrounded by mystery, and practised by charlatans. He drew a parallel between its history and that of astronomy, also preceded by its magicians and its quacks, and he asked Emilien if he knew "anything of Valz, the professor of astronomy at Nismes?"

"I know him," answered Emilien, "as a learned but humble-minded votary of science, who descends from the ethereal regions, in the contemplation of which he delights, to fill the duties of the head of a family, to the happiness and improvement of all within reach of his influence.

"Mr. Valz is a grandson of the late Dr. Baux, of Nismes, whose memory yet stands deservedly high in his country; and who has bequeathed to science his meteorological observations of forty-four years.

"Mr. Valz was lately so obliging as to give me access to his Observatory at Nismes, and to explain to me, in simple language, the uses of its furniture. Some remembrances of this visit may,

perchance, interest you, as we sit together this evening in our grand but unpeopled mansion.

"The first object that attracts the attention of an inquirer in this Observatory of Mr. Valz, is the apparatus by the aid of which he makes his meteorological observations. At nine in the morning, at noon, and at three in the afternoon, the critical epochs of the day, you may see the observer, magnifying glass in hand, bending over his barometer to appreciate with a correctness, carried almost to the infinite, the column of mercury equivalent to that of the atmospheric air. The sensibility of Mr. Valz's instrument is so exquisite that it gives the difference of a few feet in height, that of a common table, for instance.

"From the barometer the observer passes to the horizontal thermometers, maxima and minima. When the temperature goes down, the spirit of wine held in the tube of this instrument, contracting, carries down by suction, if I may so say, and deposits below, a little white stalk. The observer may sleep in peace, the stalk remains fixed to the degree of the lowest temperature reached during the suspension of his watchings. A similar process is adopted for ascertaining the highest temperature attained; only here, mercury replaces spirits of wine, and buoys up, and deposits above, a stalk of steel, at the point of the highest temperature gained.

“The Meteorologist takes account of the direction and strength of the wind by the help of a vane, that communicates with a dial within the Observatory, to mark the direction, and to a little scale, with a spring, to mark the strength.

“This instrument is called the *anemometer*. In the south of France it appears that the direct North and South winds predominate, and that they attain in swiftness seventy-five miles an hour. The hurricanes of the Antilles reach the velocity of ninety-six miles an hour.

“The *udometer* is employed to measure the quantity of water that falls. It consists of a funnel of a size corresponding to that of a tube, the orifice of which is one-tenth of that of the funnel. The degrees are marked on a glass tube appertaining to the metallic one.

“The humidity of the air is measured by an *hygrometer*, an instrument arranged on the well-known fact that damp has the property to uncurl and lengthen hair. A hair communicates with a needle, that indicates the extensions and contractions, on a dial numbered according to a scale accepted by the scientific generally.

“All over the globe, from Calcutta to London, from the Cape of Good Hope to Philadelphia, from Moscow to Bencoolen, observers have now, for several years noted down, at fixed hours, with scrupulous exactness, all the vicissitudes of the atmosphere.

“The learned of the present age may thus be said to lay down, by their observations in Meteorology, stepping-stones for the attainment of a broader knowledge, and for discoveries of, as yet, unguessed interest. Perhaps, hereafter, we may learn the code of laws that regulates the changes of the atmosphere; then agriculture may become an exact science, and the chances of a voyage may be calculated in advance; then we may know, decisively, the influence of the moon on the atmospheric tides, the causes of the winds, and the caprices of their deviations. Perhaps, though, for the opposite idea is also admissible, perhaps, the result of all these inquiries may be to convict us of weakness, and to show us the narrow limits of our power and knowledge.

“But from the work-shop of the Meteorologist let us pass to the true observatory of the Astronomer; this, with a modern, contains two instruments only, the equatorial telescope, and the meridian telescope. This latter is a telescope carefully constructed, resting on two pivots, and so well balanced that a slight impulse of the finger can move it to, and fix it at, the given point; the effect of this power is to enable the observer to follow all the stars as they successively pass into the meridian. Crossing threads of platina determine, also, the passage of the star into the field of the glass; they are quite visible during

the day ; at night, the telescope is illuminated by a lamp, whose rays are directed through the body of the instrument, by a hollow wrought in one of the supports of it.

“The star rapidly traverses the intervals left between the threads of platina ; the observer, attentive to the phases of this silent course, follows its direction, and computes the seconds of its duration. But here arises the difficulty ; whilst the eye goes with this mysterious movement, and the mind is, as it were, absorbed in the solemn scene, the hand must note and deposit in a terrestrial book the records of the firmament. A cabinet-maker of Vigan, named Salz, has rendered service to science by the invention of a little instrument, *an accountant*, which indicates to the astronomer the number of seconds that elapse during one observation, or during several series of observations, the different elements of which it would be impossible for him to retain by the help alone of memory.

“Salz was employed by Mr. D’Assas Montdardier, both for the construction of various instruments, and also for the observation of celestial phenomena. This gentleman, a descendant of the Chevalier D’Assas, was devoted to astronomical lore, but his health did not enable him to brave the inclemency of the nights, or the fatigues of the observatory ; he erected numerous stations

up the sides of the mountain de la Tude, whence to compute the movements of the stars. Salz was his eye, and this indefatigable man has often narrated that during his nocturnal visits to the stations of la Tude, he was frequently escorted by troops of wolves, with sparkling eyes and gaping mouths, from which he could only defend himself by the help of his flaming torches.

"The equatorial telescope acts in an inverse sense to the meridian telescope. By means of a double spring, or power, it may be made to traverse every point of the heavens, whilst a rotatory motion in the plane of the equator may be imparted to it also. This instrument is particularly suited for observations, in which an object is to be followed by the eye for a long time. It is of especial use to the hunters after comets; it is by its help that several astronomers have given Celestial Charts.

"But the general scene of immensity and splendour that the heavens present through the glass is probably more interesting to those who do not make a definite study of astronomy, than any particular bodies, even Jupiter and his moons, or Saturn and his ring. For ourselves, however, profane as we are, we prefer the moon to her more brilliant cotemporaries. There is something neighbourly, almost domestic, we may say, in the moon. The telescope so enlarges her pale face to our

vision, that we can feed imagination with some notion of what is going on there. A curious scene is the moon through a good telescope, with its broad plains, its frowning peaks with their deep shadows; its circular hollows, high banked, like the craters of gigantic volcanoes.”

Here the Curé rose, and looking at the time-piece, observed, that he feared if he stayed to accompany Emilien in so distant an excursion, he should scarcely reach his home that night, and he had the Pont-du-Gard to cross; and the wind was howling fiercely, and presaged a storm.

To *speed the parting guest* was the duty of hospitality under such circumstances, and the door of St. Privat closed on a visitor who left behind him a pleasant remembrance.

Morning came, and farewells; the clack of the mill, and the cries of the birds hovering about, were heard for the last time. The travellers gathered a few flowers in remembrance of Saint Privat; shook hands heartily with the seneschal; said good-bye to the dog, who looked ready to cry, with his great marigold-coloured eyes, as Reuben patted his head; and again, and once more, turning round to survey the gigantic Aqueduct, slowly drove off, in the direction of Nismes, from the hospitable mansion, where a day of real pleasure, (a great entry in the page of human life) had been passed by them all.

THE HALT IN THE DESERT.¹

The hot sun shrinks from the land of the Kurd,
As the welcome cry of "The Halt" is heard ;
Weary and faint were they who had striven,
Through the sultry hours when that cry was given.—
From his courser's neck each has loosed the rein,
And he feeds at will on the verdant plain,
The oasis he patiently toiled to gain ;
Or drinks of the fount that is welling by,
Whilst the sunset breeze wakes rejoicingly ;
And Arab and Frank in brotherhood share,
A luxurious rest 'mid the perfumed air.

But the pearly light of the crescent moon,
From the blue arch gleams on that wide saloon ;
And each Moslem kneels, as he views on high,
The auspicious sign in the starry sky :
And the hum of the murmur'd rite is there,
And the heave of the voiceless heart in prayer,
And that balmy sense of entire repose,
That the toil-worn spirit so seldom knows.

"Look, Reuben," said Emilien, "yonder is the TOUR MAGNE, the landmark of Nismes," and forthwith this notorious old edifice, that prevents Nismes from resembling any other collection of houses and buildings whatsoever, became visible in the horizon. Standing on high, like a Pharos, it attracts from afar every one's attention, and announces the approach to the ancient metropolis of a Roman colony. This monument is highly

¹ Written by me many years ago, and inserted in the *Lit-rary Gazette*.

interesting to the antiquary, but it is still more so to the citizen of Nismes, to whom it announces home and fireside; it was said, jokingly, of the Nimois, that their conscripts deserted as soon as they lost sight of this stronghold of protection.

This old tower has seen many centuries, and, like other veterans, has lived long enough to come down in the world. At first it was, as is supposed, the sumptuous Mausoleum of a Greek family, during the settlement of the Phocians at Marseilles; subsequently it was surrounded by the Romans with high walls, and made by them, as seems probable, a semaphor to correspond Southward with that of Bellegarde, and Northward with a series of elevated points, joining on to Clermont, the capital of the Auvergnats. Centuries after it was a place of defence for the Saracens, and was threatened by Charles Martel, who was irritated with the Nimois for their too easy defection. Later again, when Nismes bristled with bastions, and wore her girdle of trenches and moats, the TOUR MAGNE became a mighty fortress for the reduction of which princes contended, and treaties were executed. And now, having served the varying exigencies of years, as they rolled over its head, it finishes in our days of practical utility, by acting as a stand for a telegraph, to transmit the number of a lottery ticket, or some such communication, from the

windmill at Puech d'Autel, to the contemptible little tower of Font Froide.

"It is like the olive tree, then," said Reuben, "that comes down at last to the Gypsies," as he listened to this biography.

"Look," said Felix, "yonder are some of the folks you speak of."

Under the arch of an old bridge from beneath which the water of some little brook had ceased to flow, or rather, had flown away, a group of copper-coloured people were gathered round a caldron of unusual size, the savour of which apprised the passers by that it was dinner time at the bridge of St. Benet.

The men were stretched out on the ground half asleep, waiting the auspicious moment of summons; the children were tumbling about, head over heels, to the chance, as it seemed, of bounding into the soup tureen; whilst the women, busy, dirty, and noisy, shuffled about in every direction, with no apparent vocation but that of dislodging everything, animate and inanimate, within their orbit; a few tawny skinned dogs, with cropped ears and crooked tails, snarled and scampered about here and there, frisky with the smell of the viands, thus completing the family party.

"The lofty qualities of the Gypsies," said Emilien, "are vaunted by some novel writers,

but I fear they exist too often only in imagination. Still, the Gypsies are not altogether outcasts from the law of conscience written in the heart of man, nor from the influence of Christianity that surrounds and protects them. I witnessed a touching instance of conjugal affection in a young woman of this tribe, a short time since. I had noticed for several months during my ministry as Chaplain to the Penitentiary of Nismes, a boy about seven years of age, who endeavoured to attract my attention; he appeared to belong to a young woman who had fixed her abode at the base of the rampart of the citadel of Nismes; the mother kept half shrinking from sight, shivering with cold through her rags, and holding, by her fireplace, wrapped up in a piece of matting, a babe, so young, it is to be presumed it was born amidst the rubbish of the spot. The woman had good features, but they were peculiarly those of her race; it appeared that her husband had been condemned to some months' imprisonment for a theft, and that she had followed him from a distance on foot, weary, and carrying her eldest boy on her back, to live as near him as walls and sentries allowed her. There she counted the days till his release, living on the charity of passers by; if a stranger threw her a few halfpence, she joyfully ran towards the gate to supplicate the turnkey to remit them to the poor prisoner. On

the day of release, several members of the tribe came to welcome their brother, and to carry him and his family far away to some land where laws were weaker, or men less watchful."

"Madame must have been a pleasing individual," said Felix; "imprisonment is a dreadful punishment to a gypsy, with his open air habits, and, indeed, to all men."

"Yes," said Haddo, "we feel for the state captive, and his tale calls up the ready tear, but we forget the misery of the every-day captive, incarcerated for some petty theft, that hunger, or cold, may prompt a sad, untaught, uncared for fellow creature to commit. If we follow the guilty but unfortunate man (I do not, of course, speak of the hardened offender) from the moment when, in shame and despair, escorted by the police, he sees the heavy revolving gate close on him, to the joyful moment when this same gate re-opens to let him go free, we should unroll a page of our moral history, which, if not lovely, or amusing, is yet worthy to interest him who owns in every human being a brother, and who remembers *that as in water face answers to face, so does the heart of man to man.*"

As Haddo spoke these last words, a troop of painful looking objects came in sight; they were convicts going to the Central House at Nismes, pale, downcast, emaciated looking creatures, with

long beards and ragged garments. The procession halted at a rising ground that commanded a fine view; one of the prisoners, a young man whose appearance betokened a higher grade than that to which most of his companions seemed to belong, and on whose contrite aspect we read a first imprisonment, and, as charity augured, a last, turned back and gazed eagerly on the landscape.

"Let him look," said Felix, "it may be one, two, or many years before he again beholds those green fields, those gushing streams, or those lively hamlets that animate the plain."

Reuben gazed sorrowfully after these poor persons, who were going to Nismes for pain, as he was for pleasure, and Emilien, to divert his thoughts, again pointed out the TOUR MAGNE, now seen from a different direction, and presenting a different aspect.

"You see this singular tower," he said, "with the noon-day sun pouring down upon it till the air seems to undulate against its naked walls; you should see it also at sunset, glowing with hues that are the despair of the artist. Now it looks well from behind that noble clump of chestnut trees; presently it will assume the semblance of a gloomy rock, surmounting a pile of similar rocks."

Nismes now came bodily into sight, and at once put a stop to talking; at a distance it has

little individuality; at noon, the houses seem to blend with the barren rocks from amidst which they surge up; in the evening, as it has few lofty buildings, the shadows are not picturesque, but the great size of the city is only the more apparent from this; we feel the grandeur of the immense mass of masonry covering densely the expanse before us.

There is something inexpressibly attractive in the reminiscences of Imperial Rome, that meet us at every turn in this part of France.

The special name even of the district reveals the fact of its conquest and colonisation by Rome. About a hundred and twenty-five years before the birth of our Blessed SAVIOUR, the PRINCE of PEACE, the Romans established a Colony at Aix, under the name of their Proconsul C. Sextius; and then, when they found their rule steady there, they began to subjugate the surrounding territory, which came on to be called by them *Provincia Nostra*, (our Province,) whence now comes the modern name of *Provence*;—a name fragrant to us with roses and jasmin, and telling of the sweet South, with its luxurious harmonies, rather than of the iron yoke of the "*Nation of fierce countenance*," who, that they might act as foreordained, though unconscious registrars of the Royal Birth at Bethlehem, "*sent forth a decree that all the world should be taxed*;" and

next, in due order fulfilling every letter of prophecy, who raised the eagle against the walls of Jerusalem.

Now it came to pass about three years after the Roman colony at Aix was first established, that the Avernians, a people inhabiting broad lands to the right of the Rhone, stirred up by Teutomatius, a neighbouring monarch who had been stripped of his states by the new comers, and joined by other suffering Gaulish kings, who had much to complain of also, made war against the Romans in high style, exactly as if they had all been civilised people instead of barbarians.

Domitius Ænobarbus, the Proconsul, was excessively angry, of course, and went out to meet the enemy with all the strength of battle; he defeated them in open field, at a village on the Sorgne, now called Bédarrides. Twenty thousand fell on the plain beneath the steel of the victorious legions, and Domitius, being a haughty man, and elated with success, passed on in triumph through the whole country, with such pomp and warlike magnificence, that his progress from the Sorgne down to the Greek city of Marseilles on the mouths of the Rhone, has been remembered ever since, for the road retains his name still. *La Voie Domitien* tells us, at the distance of two thousand years, which way this august procession

went; and the triumphal arches of *Orange*,¹ of *Carpentras*, and of *Cavaillon*, bisecting the route, attest with their ponderous masonry, and many sculptured faces, the extraordinary anxiety the party in question felt for posterity to be abundantly and enduringly reminded, that once upon a time, Domitius, the Roman Proconsul, rode as master-man from the Isère to the shores of the Great Sea, mounted on an elephant,—

“The beast that bath between his eyes
The serpent for a hand,”

and preceded by his warrior train, rejoicing in victory, but ready to exchange the sword for the reaping-hook, so soon as a division of the fruitful lands they passed over should give them an opportunity to do so.

That many Roman soldiers became landed pro-

¹ Different authors have assigned different origins to these triumphal arches; but Count Gasparin, in his learned work on Orange, puts foremost the one here adopted. He states, quoting Suetonius, that Domitius Ænobarbus, being aggravated with the Senate of Rome, for refusing to decree him a triumph, upon the pretext—frivolous and vexatious as he, the Proconsul, himself, conceived it to be—that his victories, though splendid, were not actually conclusive as to the entire subjugation of the whole of Gaul, determined to make as showy an affair as possible of the rejoicing in the locality on his behalf: and, that, the farther to perpetuate the remembrance of his achievements, he did, then and there, erect, or cause to be erected, the above-named remarkable monuments.

prietors in this part of France is evident from the very names of the places.

In a circumference of a radius of about eighteen or twenty miles from Nismes, we find numerous towns and villages whose names end in *argues*; these names, by the learned, are derived from the name of a Roman proprietor, prefixed to the word *ager*, which signifies a *field*. Thus, *Gallargues* may have been the property of *Q. Statius Gallus*, whom an ancient inscription informs us was in office at Nismes.

Marsillargues may have been the field of *M. Acilius*; and this, indeed, is proved almost to a certainty from an inscription giving the orthography of the two names of Caylar and Marsillargues, with their origin, referring them to certain individuals. Nearly a hundred of such names may be traced in the towns round Nismes. Running half through the alphabet, we have *Vendargues*, *Baillargues*, *Olérargues*, *Saturargues*, *Estézargues*, and so on, sprinkled all over the district.

There is one other memorial of Rome also to be noticed near Nismes, namely, the mile-stones. These all belong to the Empire; by their shape and make it is easy to discern, at a glance, under which monarch they were thrown down there. Much importance was attached to the planting of these mile-stones, which were always inaugurated with a sort of religious ceremony.

The mile-stones on the Roman way leading from Nismes, were always placed, as elsewhere, to the left-hand side of the road going out of the city from which they counted the distance. They were of different forms. We find them of the reigns of four Emperors only; Augustus, Tiberius, Claudius, and Antoninus the Pious, and they are all of different make.

Those of Augustus are cylindrical throughout the whole length, and the inscription is engraved round the column, without any border, and in very large characters.

Those of Tiberius are square, in form of pilasters, and the base enlarges as it nears the ground. The inscription is engraved within a frame, on a sort of tablet, in relief.

Those belonging to the reign of Claudius are cylindrical throughout, like those of Augustus, but the letters are wrought in a frame sunk in the column; that is, the inscription is deep set in the stone, but with a prominent border-scroll wreathing round.

Finally, those of Antoninus are also of the same form, but the inscription is contained in a frame thrown out in strong relief; and the pedestal of the column is large, square, and of rough stone.

And now, having diligently counted the mile-stones until we have reached the small ornamented one outside the Gate of Augustus, which, without

number or inscription, denotes it to be the primary stone whence the ground was measured, we are actually in Nismes, and must begin to look about us.

Passing the wall of the new Cemetery that runs along the high road for a space, and bears on a decorated tablet this stern inscription—

After Death the Judgment,

in very large characters, the party at length entered Nismes.

Nismes is to the Rome of the Cæsars what Avignon is to the Rome of the Popes ; with this difference, however, that the Romans settled down at Nismes as if for a permanency, whilst the Popes never considered Avignon a definite residence ; it was an *improvised* capital.

Nismes, now the principal place of the Department of Gard, is situated more than five hundred miles south of Paris, in the plain of the Vistre, surrounded by a hilly country that forms the first tier of the Cevennes. It contains more than fifty thousand inhabitants located in a nearly circular enclosure, that may be called the City, and in broad suburbs radiating out to a considerable distance. Nismes has been divided into twelve sections, each of which is crossed by streets, bearing names grouped in series. To give the origin of these names would be almost

to give the history of the place. We will quote a few of them.

To the North-West the streets of a portion of the suburbs bear the names of the Roman Emperors and great men who contributed the most to embellish Nismes: Titus, Adrian, Antoninus, and others. The name of Plautinus is attached to the remains of a superb basilica, decorated with friezes of white marble, still admired by artists.

The suburb to the North, which takes the name of *The Land of the Strong*, perpetuates in its streets the names of several persons who illustrated the district by talents or virtues.

VIDAL, a learned lawyer of 1499.

ROBERT, a judge in the criminal court. He wrote on the antiquities of Nismes.

BAUDEL, 1539, Rector of the new University founded by Francis I. He embraced the Reformation at its first appearance.

PETIT, a Protestant Minister; Principal of the College of Arts, celebrated for his erudition. He one day entered a synagogue at Avignon, where a Rabbi was declaiming in Hebrew against the Christians, and surprised both preacher and audience by answering the attack of the orator in the same language.

COTELLIER, who in 1641, at the age of thirteen, translated at sight from the Old and New

Testaments, in their original languages, before a general assembly of the Clergy of France. He revised, under Colbert, the manuscripts of the royal library. Several of his works on Catholic theology are extant.

SAURIN, who illustrated the Protestant pulpit by sermons as noble as those of Massillon and Bourdaloue in the Catholic Church.

MENARD, a counsellor, the author of a history of Nismes in seven wordy volumes, often obscure and tinged with prejudice, but from which, however, all those who have subsequently written on that place have drawn largely. There are also names attached to some of the streets of the *Land of the Strong*, of persons not belonging to Nismes, but who bequeathed remembrances to it. Among them is that of Astruc, the physician of Sauve.

The South-West suburbs have received the names of Apostles, and Saints, and holy men. One name dear to the Nimois is conspicuous among these ecclesiastic remembrances—that of Bishop BECDELIEVRE, who honoured his Episcopate at Nismes by tolerance and humanity.

In the heart of the city, *Lombard Street* recalls the Italian merchants who brought commerce along with them to France, in the Thirteenth Century.

SALAMANDER SQUARE commemorates the pillar

erected there when Francis I. passed through Nismes, and which bore the device of a salamander upon it, the armorial bearing of Francis.

THE TREASURY, a name borne by a small street leading to the Hotel-de-Ville, indicates the original destination of that building.

MINT STREET, indicates the ancient privilege accorded to Nismes, of coining money.

CASTLE SQUARE preserves the remembrance of a fortress built there to replace that of the Arena. Several streets have lost their original designations, or preserve only vague and imperfect recollections.

The monuments of Nismes consist of the Arena, and of certain structures going far back in date, but not possessing much beauty to make them interesting, if we except the MAISON CARREE, admired by all, and designated by the author of ANACHARSIS, with pardonable exaggeration, "the masterpiece of ancient architecture, and the despair of modern." Cardinal Alberoni wanted a gold case to cover it with; Colbert lusted to remove it to Versailles; and Napoleon I. is said to have indulged also in the same wish.

It may be supposed that Emilien drew the attention of his friends to this monument: he told them, in fact, a long story about it, which may be abbreviated thus.

The MAISON CARREE is supposed to be a remnant of a vast building, and originally the Sanctuary of a Forum. An inscription on the wall appears to intimate a dedication of the building to Marcus and Lucius, adopted sons of Antoninus, who was of Nismes, and under whose rule the Corinthian style attained its full perfection.

When the Christians destroyed the statues and false gods at Nismes, they spared this fragment of the Forum, and dedicated it to their proto-martyr Saint Stephen.

In the Eleventh Century the Church was turned into a Town Hall; the interior was divided into rooms, and sliced into stories, whilst windows were wrought in the sides of the building.

Subsequently a citizen of Nismes purchased it, and reared his habitation against its eastern front. The MAISON CARREE passed successively into the hands of other individuals, and at length into those of one Brueys, lord of St. Chaptes, a renowned personage among the destroyers of the vestiges of antiquity. Brueys made a stable of the MAISON CARREE !

He joined up the rows of columns with a brick wall, and brake in pieces the pretty architectural ornaments that interrupted his plans; he wrought an opening through the centre to give broader space for his cattle to go in and out at; made granaries of the upper floors, and perforated the

walls (brute beast as he himself was) for the better securing of his racks and mangers; also, he mutilated the capitals of the columns for the purposes of fastening his cows to them, on occasions when it suited him for his creatures to bivouac outside the building.

Next came, for owners of the **MAISON CARREE**, the Augustine monks, who joined it to their monastery adjacent; they did no harm to the building, happily, save in the excavations they wrought in the caverns of the sanctuary for their burials.

The Revolution in turn drove away the Augustines, to replace them by sacks of wheat and trusses of hay; the meetings of the Central Administration were also, sometimes, held at the **MAISON CARREE**, which, in fact, under the new order of things, served for a corn-market, and for a sort of Guildhall.

Finally, at the beginning of the present century, the **MAISON CARREE** was restored to the Fine Arts; enlightened authorities vigilantly watched over its preservation, and restorations, which, if erroneous, were always directed by good taste, have re-produced the edifice as a new and beautiful building.

The eye delights to glance over its proportions, so simple altogether, yet so perfect in their details; to watch the light playing over the chiselled

capitals of the aerial Corinthian columns, and along the graceful twining flowers of the sculptured frieze. The perfect taste of this building, which is so small in itself that it is compared by all observers to a toy, seems yet to endow it with the dignity and splendour of the genius that presided over its construction, and so, in one sense, to make it actually great.

As some may wish for information as to the style of this building, it is here noted down that the entrance to the MAISON CARREE faces the North; the building is ornamented by thirty columns, each having twenty-four flutings, the columns are of various pieces, perfectly joined; the acanthus leaves that decorate the capitals are wonderfully delicate. The frieze and the cornice are the parts of the building that have received the highest finish, and that attract most attention.

The MAISON CARREE is, in shape, a long square, its length is about eighty feet, and its breadth about forty feet; the height of the door is about twenty-three feet, and its breadth more than ten feet.¹

The interior of the MAISON CARREE is now used as a picture gallery, and a museum of Natural History.

Of the defects, or peculiarities, remarked by

¹ Proportions in French measure: length 25 metres, 13 c.; breadth 12m. 27c.; height of door 7m. 13c.; breadth 3m. 25c.

the critical in this building, the principal are, that the columns are at unequal distances from each other; that the horizontal cornice of the North front gives only twenty-nine sections, whilst that of the South has thirty-three; that the lateral façade to the West has fifty-four sections, whilst sixty-four are counted on the opposite side; and that, lastly, the bases of the columns, though exquisitely wrought, present, according to Palladio, some eccentricities in their channelling.

Reuben was restless to pay his respects to the TOUR MAGNE, and the party decided to ascend forthwith Mont Cavalier, to indulge him with the best possible view of it. The shady pathway up this hill is a pleasant promenade in every weather; as it is sheltered from the north wind, the air here is always soft, whilst it is balmy from the rosemary shrubs, and resinous trees growing about in quantities. A leisurely ascent of Mont Cavalier employs nearly an hour; about half way up the eye plays with a joyous landscape, which many travellers have compared to that of the environs of Florence; but advance higher still, and this view disappears; the blue horizon sinks down behind a table-land choked up with fragments of ruins, and you have straight before you, nothing but the melancholy downs, and, for first tier, a mass of stones, rent, and displaced, and presenting here, broken stones, there, ruined pilasters, but

gradually, beneath the steady gaze, gathering itself up, and shaping itself into the semblance of a tower, of greyish hue towards the North, and brightening into gold-colour on the South ; this is the TOUR MAGNE.

The upper part of the tower, apart from dilapidations, is a regular octagon, the lower part has seven irregular sides ; the mass, at first, appears homogeneous, but on closer examination we perceive that the massive stones, forming round its base a sort of coating of masonry, date apparently from a period later than that of the construction of the principal edifice. The facing is almost entirely gone from the whole building, or, at least, is in a state of dilapidation. There are remains of the Roman wall, with its towers alternately circular and square, and its broad causeway at the top, along which the war-engines were rolled. The small pilasters, decorating the upper story, are of the Doric order, as indeed is the whole of the building.

Only a guess can be given as to the original shape of the summit of the tower. Some suppose it to have finished with a platform, others with a cupola. The tower seems to have been purposely built on a heap of ruins and earth, raised to a height, and serving for a sort of pedestal to the building. The solidity and strength of every part of the TOUR MAGNE are enormous ; it seems im-

possible for a man, were he to toil a whole day, and to have the aid of every sort of tool, to unpick a square foot of it.

At length the travellers walked away from the TOUR MAGNE, as they had the Arena to visit also, but it was with reluctance; there is a fascination in the exhibition of power under any guise; we seem to grow strong in its strength, and great in its greatness, as we gaze upon it.—With subdued feelings they stepped down again into Nismes.

The little stream of the Caderau sweeps past the City in the vicinity of the TOUR MAGNE. Furious storms, recently stirring the depths of its stony bed, had changed it into a rushing torrent; this phenomenon is of unfrequent occurrence, and had attracted the attention of the whole population, surprised and delighted to see a river bathing the walls of their beloved Nismes. It was fine to behold it pouring down from the hills with beneficent abundance.

The Fountain of Nismes, which gives its name to a Garden and Museum, as well as to water-works, ornaments the quarter of the town near Mont Cavalier and the Caderau. This place is much admired by strangers, who are surprised to find so pleasant a spot in the vicinity of the sun-burnt city. When we pass the gate of this privileged place, we may fancy ourselves in the precincts of Versailles or St. Cloud; indeed, what

the Garden of the Fountain loses in size and pomp, it gains in variety of site, in luxuriance of vegetation, in picturesqueness of aspect, and in fragrance. The waters pour out from remains of Roman architecture, which the intelligent antiquary will examine with pleasure. This Fountain, which is fed from the Caderau, now boiled up violently from its source, all its arches seeming too few for the issue of the great body of water.

Reuben stood entranced at the refreshing outpouring; it was in vain that Felix warned him such was not the habitual condition of the Fountain of Nismes; he had a sound of much water in his ears, and Nismes was evidently predestined to be remembered by him as a place of running streams, and living springs.

A carriage in waiting now whirled our friends through the depths of the city, from the Rue Grétry down the broad pathway of the Cours Neuf, a grand drive like our Constitution Hill, and so down to the suburb of the Montpellier Road. The sun was setting, its warm tints harmoniously gilding all objects, when, at a sudden turn, they came at once on the broad front of the Arena, every detail of which started out with admirable effect from beneath a sky of intense blue, deepening a fuller hue every moment.

The Romans who vanquished so many nations, and dragged so many kings at their chariot

wheels, employed their conquered subjects to build up monuments vast enough to contain those nations themselves, solid enough to resist twenty centuries of storms and revolutions, and yet, bearing the impress of so perfect a taste, that in our modern days, the best we can do seems to be to imitate them. They have bequeathed to us their aqueducts, their military roads, and their theatres. These latter were destined for combats between gladiators and wild beasts, for water-works, and other amusements. The Arena of Nismes may serve as a specimen of constructions of this sort.

When we first make the tour of the building it seems small and crushed; it may be that the simplicity and purity of the architecture offer too few points of comparison and measure; it is observable, however, that the soil on which the edifice stands is below the level of the spectator; and, in fact, the amphitheatre is not lofty, being only from the ground to the top stone seventy feet. It stretches away, rolling out before the eye like a dyke, or long low boundary wall.

The lower part of the amphitheatre is pierced with sixty arches of equal proportions, excepting four that are larger, and that correspond with the cardinal points. These arches communicate with a corridor that runs round the whole edifice, and forms a majestic portico. It is only on the

south side that the sculptures are completed, elsewhere they are left in outline only. We learn, however, from this fact, that the workmen of that day wrought the stones after they were in their places ; this explains the perfect connexion and exquisite finish of their mural sculptures.

Above this row of arches is a second range, not so lofty, sheltered by large stones in the form of balustrades, with pilasters and little columns. The building terminated in an attic, or last story, entirely unornamented, save by a series of prominent stones perforated with large holes, in which the hundred and twenty stakes that supported the awning were planted. Two bas-reliefs in good preservation are remarked on the north-east of the edifice ; one is of gladiators, the other, of two children nursed by a wolf, recalling the legend of the foundation of Rome.

It may be presumed that each arch presented analogous ornaments ; there are worn-out traces of such all over the building, but Time, which eats us all up, has rendered them undecipherable.

On the wall, underneath one of the seats, or boxes, assigned to families of distinction, are nine heads, carved and sculptured, which probably are portraits of members of one of those families. It would be a quaint but pleasant piece of biography to recover the domestic history of these nine personages ; of their loves and their learning, their

feuds and their friendships, their fathers and mothers, their sons and their daughters. Perhaps descendants of some of them may yet survive, and among the many curious who now gaze upon these sculptured heads, there may be eyes that have come down in lineal descent from one of them; but whether they now look out from the sun-burnt face of some market woman, or from beneath the fair brow of the titled beauty; from amidst the clustering dark curls of the young Nimois, or from the foreign features of the traveller now wandering hither from distant climes, unconscious of any tie of sympathy, and desirous only to behold the peculiarities of the scene, and so to depart,—who may say?

Family likenesses, we will surmise, may be worn out by this time; but even this is problematical. Who can assign a limit to the transmission of a set of features, or a countenance? Nations keep their characteristic physiognomy from age to age, and why not families? In old mansions, containing galleries of family portraits, it is interesting to notice the repetitions, in whole or in part, of the faces of the first man and woman of the series; how the likeness of a mouth, the flash of an eye; the pleasant smile; the dark frown; a strong and massive brow; a round and dimpled chin, will reappear again and again, at intervals, down the whole line

But it is still more interesting to observe, in

the histories extant of long and noted families, the recurrence of the same intellectual peculiarities, from time to time, throughout the lineage; there may be breaks and turnings, abrupt departures from the normal type, but often only for an after generation to fall back to it more decidedly, when the characteristics of the founder of the family blaze up once more, as if rekindled from the pristine lamp. And it is particularly curious to notice also, the various forms under which the same mental attribute presents itself; the various uses, so to speak, which the different individuals make of the raw material of some faculty or talent transmitted to them.

No doubt Thomas-a-Becket inherited from his mother, (though he applied them so differently,) the strong will, and oneness of purpose, that made his life so memorable. The story of the Saracen maiden—one of the prettiest in the Chronicles of the Crusaders—represents her as liberating an Englishman from captivity, and then, with two words only of his language in her mouth, "*Gilbert*," and "*London*," making her way in peace and honour, with her youth and loveliness, from the Syrian Strand to within Temple-Bar, to find in Austin-Friars the same Gilbert-a-Becket of the captivity, whom, with faith unfeigned and full of hope, she had followed from Paynim lands; and there, being baptized into his Church, and married to him at a Christian altar,—taking his God for

her God, and his people for her people, to become one of the worthiest of English matrons, and the mother of the mighty prince and prelate, who, in life divided the power with his sovereign, and in death, has been remembered, for six centuries, with a homage approaching to worship, conceded to the hero by those even who know him not as the saint.

Thomas-à-Becket, in his fall at the altar, has always appeared to me an exceedingly grand personage, embodying pre-eminently personal dignity and religious trust and veneration.

But it is time to find our way into the Arena ; unmolested we make the circuit of the edifice under the portico ; but before we penetrate into its silent solitudes, we still see in every direction, under favour of the arches, the whole population of Nismes, all on foot, and out of doors, active, hurrying, fiery, as is their wont ; now pacing with quick step along the shaded boulevards, now pushing on into the narrowest and darkest streets of the city ; here restless and anxious, treading the thresholds of the courts of justice ; farther on, leisurely and idle, criticising the news of the day on the burning terrace of the esplanade. A singular view, in truth, is this living panorama, or rather, this series of vignettes, of the moving population of Nismes, shut up in the classic frame of a Roman arch ; it is like a modern cameo in an antique setting.

A part of these ruins have been repaired, but with imperfect success as to the preservation of the hues of old. Do let us leave ruins to their rightful owners;—to Time, to Art, to History. Let us with our modern materials build beautiful things for moderns; let us not overmuch clutch at the past. Let us leave ruins to painters, for peaceful sketches; to historians, for witnesses to dates in the roll of ages, as the "*mark*,"—the sign-manual, of defunct empires; and to the careless multitude as memorials, that death in due season will swallow up them also. But let the ruin manage its own matters, and decay, deeper and deeper, after its own fashion. Let us not, in the name of Truth, of Nature, and of good feeling, attempt to repair, that is, to restore a ruin, as a ruin, mocking the tarnished hues of age.

In the seclusion of this spot, when the eye has travelled the circuit of these walls, bearing every where the marks of grandeur and devastation, the biography of the place rises to memory, or shapes itself to fancy. A reverie of the past may be sketched thus.

One fine summer's day in the city of Rome, about the year 140, after the birth of CHRIST, Antoninus the Pious stepping along in the sunshine, feeling amiable and condescending, watched with pleasure the frolics of a parcel of children, disporting themselves in the majestic shade of the

Coliseum ; his mind resting a moment from the cares of Empire, turned to the amusements and the amenities of life ; and as fighting with anything, man or beast, was then classed under both these heads, he called to remembrance that Nismes, his ancestral city, had not yet its Coliseum,—its nice place for playing at killing in, and had exhausted its resources in building baths and palaces. So Antoninus bestowed treasures on Nismes for the erection of an Arena.

Presently the mountains resounded with the strokes of the pickaxe ; rocks were hewn and wrought into slabs ; and, piece by piece, the Arena was transported, ready-made, from the quarries of Roquemalière and Barutel to the heart of Nismes.

But Marcus Aurelius, the successor of Antoninus, being a philosopher, did not vouchsafe to meddle with the toys of triflers, so he left the people of Nismes to amuse themselves by themselves, and therefore it is that their Arena, no longer kept up at the charge of the Imperial purse, remained somewhat incomplete, without receiving the last finish.

Meantime, as the edifice was strong, and polished enough for the uses to which it was destined, the people continued, on festival days, for more than three hundred years, to pour on into its seats, whilst the dust of the Arena was ploughed up by the hoofs of bulls and feet of dogs, lashed

by the tails of lions and panthers, and reddened by the blood of beasts, of gladiators, and of Christian martyrs.

Anon, the waters from the great Aqueduct of the Pont-du-Gard were poured on in floods, and the Nimois rejoiced in aquatic sports, which if not quite in the style of a race with the *America* from the Nab Light to the North Foreland, were so far satisfactory in their day and generation as to gain for the Naumachia of Nismes honourable mention in the chronicles of the fifth, and some two or three succeeding centuries.

Christianity, in its progress, put an end to gladiatorial combats, and new architects penetrated within the Roman enclosure: with the fragments, the odds and ends of chipped stones, that the Romans had thrown away at the entrance of the quarries, they raised up two square towers, with moats and barbicans, on the eastern side of the amphitheatre. The Doric arches were walled up; the panther dens were changed into barracks; the seats of the circus bristled with javelins; and one day a mighty cloud of arrows was heard to whistle through the arena against the armies of Clovis; meantime, the inhabitants of the *Castrum Arenarum*, (for the Arena had now become a fortress,) wore helmets.

Soon, for a brief space, the Christian helmets were exchanged for the turbans of Mahomet, and

the dwellers in the *Castrum Arenarum* wore garments striped with azure and gold; only ever kept they on fighting.

But before the close of the Eighth Century, the Saracens disappeared, and the Mayor of the Palace, the Prince of the Franks, Charles-Martel, filled the galleries of the Arena with straw, fagots, and resinous matter, to hasten the destruction of an edifice that had offered a formidable retreat to his enemies. A strange notion that of setting fire to rocks! He must have been helped by a terrible wind, for whilst one part of the Arena has preserved its fine ancient hues, on that towards the sea, the façade is blackened by smoke, and the stones are scaled by heat. It appears that the Nimois had not kept faith with Charles-Martel, and that the Mayor of the Palace loved not the Nimois.

In the Eleventh Century a church was built in the Arena, and dedicated to St. Martin. The Viscounts of Nismes also held their Court there then, and they entrusted their redoubtable Castle there, to chosen men,—Knights of the Arena. The edifice now becomes a place with its own laws and privileges; a city by itself, with its own Consuls.

In the Thirteenth Century the towers of the Arena again bristled with warlike engines, pointed against the Albigenses.

In the Fourteenth Century, Charles the Sixth built a castle near the gate of Carmes; and the Arena, deserted by the court and chivalry, became then the haunt of the poorest and least orderly part of the population; a sort of ant-hill, swarming with dirt, disease, and credulity; a veritable Alsatia, where craft eluded law, and violence defied it.

Then came the Sixteenth Century with Francis the First, who, ever knightly and honourable, and a gentleman in all his ideas and ways, sent forth his royal word for the cleansing of the Arena; forthwith great demolitions ensued, and the besom of destruction swept off swarms of the encroachers, but so late as a century ago, the Arena still contained, either under the porticoes or in the body of the building, some seventy or more houses, sheltering nearly a thousand persons.

In closing this sketch of the Arena of Nismes, we will say that it would be well if we had as ready means of ingress and egress, to and from our churches and large public buildings, as were here accorded to the populace. Thirty openings, called Vomitories, gave passage to the spectators; it is computed that twenty thousand persons could pour in, or out, of the building through them, in the space of five minutes.

There is much more to be said of Nismes, and the present little sketch is felt to be meagre;—

but if it give satisfaction to any readers, and induce them to extend their summer tour from Paris down to the Plain of the Vistre, they can fill up the deficiencies for themselves, and they will be sure to return with pleasant remembrances of that ancient city, heightened in interest by the contrast with those afforded by the brilliant display of the marvels of modern art and industry at Paris in the Exhibition of 1855.

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